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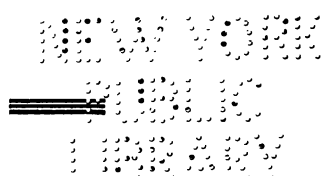
THE CANDLE AND THE FLAME

THE CANDLE AND THE FLAME

POEMS BY

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK



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TO
POPPY

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"We are the Candle, Love the Flame."

—THE CANDLE AND THE FLAME

"I am the flame, men's bodies are the fuel,
Men's souls the smoke."

—THE THREE SPHINXES

(From *Nineveh and Other Poems.*)

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INTRODUCTION

I

THE modern Muse finds herself in the same position as woman: she must divorce herself from sentimentalism without graduating into a spectacled and hyper-cerebral old maid. She must reaffirm herself intellectually, without sacrificing her sensuous appeal. Phryne is preferable to a New England spinster, but Aspasia is more desirable than Phryne. The brain thirsts for ideas, the ear thirsts for music. Both must be satisfied. Unfortunately the seductions of sound in poetry often distract attention from the intellectual content. We are compelled to emphasize the ideational values in our work if the world shall not relegate lyric verse to the nursery, a plaything for children and idiots. The salvation of poetry depends on the recognition of its philosophical message, just as the triumph of woman suffrage will not be ultimately assured until the world realizes that behind the ivory of Aphrodite's forehead there may be hidden a brain that could challenge Darwin and Bismarck. We must rehabilitate poetry as Shaw has rehabilitated the drama. We must apply Shavian methods to lyric and ballad. I have found myself as a poet. To help others to find me, I have added a commentary.

My commentary, in the shape of marginal notes, will be found in the back of this volume. Those who wish to linger with me after reading the poems may turn to my notes at their leisure. Far be it from me to discourage future commentators from independent investigation. My remarks are suggestive, not final. If our palace of song is worth the rearing, we must build better than we know, because we draw strength and matter from our racial conscience and from world memories slumbering unbeknown of us in the caverns of our brain. But we may give a clue now and then which can direct the mind of the reader and perhaps prevent critics yet unborn from wasting marvellously ingenious devices upon the erection of spurious pyramids on the base of a fatal misprint or a mistaken assumption. Neither Goethe, nor Shakespeare, it may be urged, was his own commentator. The resultant loss, however, was both theirs and the world's. What would we not give to-day for an authentic key to " Faust II " or to Shakespeare's " Sonnets "?

II

THIS, in all likelihood, will be my last book of verse. I no longer worship Beauty. Art for art's sake seems a jest, literature only a sickly mirage of life. My temperament is more dynamic than æsthetic. Activity, as such, allures me. Brooklyn Bridge seems to me a far more marvellous accomplishment than the most precious of sonnets. If I were not Viereck, I would gladly be Edison.

I sometimes suspect that I would rather have reared the Metropolitan Building than written my poem "Queen Lilith." The spirit of America has eaten into my heart. Wall Street is more interesting to me than Parnassus. The protagonists of great industrial combinations impress me more than the Knights of King Arthur's Table or the vassals of Beowulf. Yet we cannot extol the Standard Oil Company in blank verse nor encompass in a series of sonnets the exploits of J. Pierpont Morgan. Morgan himself, so I am told, was a poet before finance enthralled him. Poetry, being the child of tradition, must necessarily lag behind the times at least by a century. We must write of the new in terms of the old, even if our work be surcharged with novel ideas, because the new terms have not yet acquired the connotative poetic values which, like certain rare mosses, take decades for their growth. The poet of the year two thousand will be able to write the poetry of to-day. The year three thousand may see the history of Rockefeller and Morgan embedded in heroic hexameters.

We can press forward only so far as the limitations of lyric art and our own limitations permit. Our accents, however, will ever wax in resonance through the ages if we dwell on those themes which cannot grow stale while the race draws breath: metaphysical truths, elemental passions, and elemental satieties. In this book I pass from the physics to the metaphysics of passion. Conservative though I be in business and politics, I shall never be a moralist in art. My work is unconventional because conventions mean ever less to me the more I vibrate to the heart-beats of life itself.

I find it difficult, for instance, to write a play because the basic conflicts of conventional drama have ceased to interest me. My own emotions are too elusive and too complex to be capable of expression or understanding beyond where I have gone. If I lived in Europe, if mine were the freedom of Wedekind and the audience that hails him and goads him, I might still go on. But I realize that I am too far ahead of the pageant of American life to go one step further. I have reached an Ultima Thule. Seated by the roadside, I shall wait for America to catch up, dividing my time, perchance, between love and the ticker.

America forces its poets to deny poetry or leave the country! Henry James chose exile, J. Pierpont Morgan diverted his imaginative powers into the channels of high finance. Stedman, attempting a compromise, was distinctly minor both as a banker and as a poet. George Santayana fled to the cloister of his own mind, Poe to drink, Markham to book reviews. Roosevelt, the most poetical personality of the modern world, turned to politics, Whitman to sociology, Moody to melodrama, Woodberry and Van Dyke to the schoolroom, while the tentacles of the Standard Oil encircled the poet's soul of J. I. C. Clarke. Huneker's muse abandoned inspiration for criticism. The newspaper swallowed Bert Taylor and William Marion Reedy, while Michael Monahan harks to seductive voices not Pierian. But the torch of our lyric fire still burns and will continue to burn when it has passed from my hands into those of a younger poet.

III

I HAVE no reason to be ungrateful to America. Few poets have met with more instant recognition than I. My work, almost from the beginning, was discussed simultaneously in the most conservative periodicals and in the most ultra-saffron complexioned of journals. I have given a new lyric impetus to my country. I have loosened the tongue of the young American poets. I have been told by many of our young singers that the success of *Nineveh* encouraged them to break the harassing chains of Puritan tradition. When, recently, as the first American "Exchange Poet" I lectured at the University of Berlin, I assured my audience that we have rebels not only in politics but also in poetry. I may safely say that I am one of the leaders of the lyric insurgents who, inheriting the technique of Poe and the social conscience of Whitman, have added the new note of passion.

When my last volume of verse appeared, the endorsement of Europe was written across its pages. This endorsement was not repudiated by the American critics. Even from the commercial point of view, my book was not unsuccessful. I am, perhaps, the only American poet whose book of lyric verse made money for himself and his publishers. Success, however, is not without penalties. Only recently I vicariously overheard the remark of a gifted young poet of twenty-two, erstwhile one of my most enthusiastic admirers: "Don't you think Viereck is tremendously overrated?" Perhaps the truth popped forth out

of the mouth of this lyric suckling. Time alone can judge. But at least I have had the unique sensation of thus experiencing, at twenty-seven, what Ibsen experienced at seventy. Already the younger generation is knocking at the gate. Let the doors be swung wide open! This book, poetic youth of America, is my parting gift to you.

IV

I AM not oblivious of the adverse criticism called forth by my books. I am keenly aware of the enmity of the Puritans. My work necessarily arouses the prurient New England Conscience. The minds of certain critics dwell exclusively on the sensuous aspects of my work, just as the eyes of Tartuffe were riveted to certain amiable portions of a lady's anatomy. My poetic interpretations of other phases of human existence were absolutely ignored. I freely admit that the passional note is sounded most insistently in my verse. Passion is the prerogative of youth. When should we be passionate, if not at twenty? The erotic powerfully appeals to me, but I have never made myself the champion of the vulgar. Sin I respect, because it is part of the quest of the human soul for the ultimate good; of vice, as such, I have a physical abhorrence. The professional voluptuary of either sex bores me.

To bear the aspersions of enemies was no difficult task. I never replied to the criticism of my work on the score of its unconventional quality, except in one instance, when censure came from

a friend. Then I spoke. The following letter, my answer to Richard Watson Gilder, was printed in the literary supplement of the New York *Times*. My attitude to-day is still the same as when I penned these lines—my æsthetic Credo:

"In the great circle of human life, I strive to express every segment, whether purple or golden, sombre or bright. But in each case I am concerned only with the spirit, the symbol, the possible underlying philosophy. It staggers me to realize what interpretation has been given to some portions of my work, interpretations so gross that they are utterly beyond my comprehension. The two classes who have most sinned against me in this respect are roués of a pronounced type and professed Puritans, men against the integrity of whose private lives Cato at his severest could not have breathed a word of scandal.

"There are critics who have discovered in 'Nineveh' only an erotic (and possibly neurotic) note. You, fortunately, have found and acknowledged that there are many poems in the book that are inspired by ideals essentially spiritual. But it grieves me that you also should not have seen that even where my pen transcribes the sombre aspects of life there is no touch of anything that is gross or foul. Far be it from me to exclude from the realm of art, especially my art, anything, even evil. It is only vulgarity that I would banish from the domain of letters, not necessarily the description of vulgarity, but vulgarity in the description.

"I must go my way, even as you have gone your way, even as Poe and Whitman, Longfellow, Whittier and Baudelaire. We are all instruments in the hands of the Unknown God who directs our activities toward some hidden and wonderful end. I love beauty as you love it, albeit I may realize it in ways essentially different from yours. But there is unity in all Godward endeavour, and grossness or vulgarity, which has no place in your dream, has no place in mine."

V

THE present volume, to reiterate, marks no change of heart. Technically I am surer of my instrument. Spiritually my field has expanded. But, in the last analysis, personality is immutable. I can clearly trace my artistic evolution along the lines which I myself laid down in an early pronunciamento. I have emancipated myself entirely from the conventional stanza and the conventional arrangement of rhymes. I am in poetry what Strauss is in music, Rodin in sculpture, and Stuck in painting,—a cerebral impressionist. But I am not an anarchist. I never transgress consciously artistic laws of universal validity. I merely modify certain traditional forms. Such modifications are not at once obvious to the eye in the present volume, because I have not followed the somewhat phantastic rhyme arrangement which I adopted in *Nineveh* to differentiate between various groups of rhymes. For when the lines sprawl across the page grotesquely like tremulous

spiders, the mind is diverted from the poem to the form, and the artistic method defeats the artistic aim. In this book I have placed lines that rhyme under each other, wherever this was possible without injuring the architectonic structure. I am perfectly willing to sacrifice logic to effectiveness in art. Poetry has its architecture as well as its music. The free stanza which I consistently employ permits of the freedom of Whitman without sacrificing the tonal advantage of Poe. My artistic aim, declared years ago in the preface to *Nineveh,* has been and still is, "to extend the borderland of poetry into the realm of music on the one side, into that of the intellect on the other."

GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

New York, 1912.

THE CANDLE AND THE FLAME

THE CANDLE AND THE FLAME

THY hands are like cool herbs that bring
Balm to men's hearts, upon them laid;
Thy lovely-petalled lips are made
As any blossom of the spring.
But in thine eyes there is a thing,
O Love, that makes me half afraid.

For they are old, those eyes. . . . They gleam
Between the waking and the dream
With antique wisdom, like a bright
Lamp strangled by the temple's veil,
That beckons to the acolyte
Who prays with trembling lips and pale
In the long watches of the night.

They are as old as Life. They were
When proud Gomorrah reared its head
A new-born city. They were there
When in the places of the dead
Men swathed the body of the Lord.
They visioned Pa-Wak raise the wall
Of China. They saw Carthage fall
And marked the grim Hun lead his horde.

There is no secret anywhere
  Nor any joy or shame that lies
  Not writ somehow in those child-eyes
  Of thine, O Love, in some strange wise.
Thou art the lad Endymion,
  And that great queen with spice and myrrh
From Araby, whom Solomon
  Delighted, and the lust of her.

The legions marching from the sea
With Cæsar's cohorts sang of thee,
  How thy fair head was more to him
Than all the land of Italy.
Yea, in the old days thou wert she
  Who lured Mark Antony from home
To death and Egypt, seeing he
  Lost love when he lost Rome.

Thou saw'st old Tubal strike the lyre,
  Yea, first for thee the poet hurled
Defiance at God's starry choir!
Thou art the romance and the fire,
  Thou art the pageant and the strife,
The clamour, mounting high and higher,
  From all the lovers in the world
  To all the lords of love and life.

Through thy slow slumberous long lashes
  Across the languor of the face

The gleam of primal passion flashes
  That is as ancient as the race,
  But we that live a little space,
Which when beholding feel in it
The horror of the Infinite . . .

Perhaps the passions of mankind
  Are but the torches mystical
Lit by some spirit-hand to find
The dwelling of the Master-Mind
  That knows the secret of it all,
In the great darkness and the wind.

We are the Candle, Love the Flame,
  Each little life-light flickers out,
Love bides, immortally the same:
When of life's fever we shall tire
He will desert us, and the fire
  Rekindle new in prince or lout.

Twin-born of knowledge and of lust,
  He was before us, he shall be
  Indifferent still of thee and me,
When shattered is life's golden cup,
When thy young limbs are shrivelled up,
And when my heart is turned to dust.

Nay, sweet, smile not to know at last
  That thou and I, or knave, or fool,

Are but the involitient tool
Of some world-purpose vague and vast.
No bar to passion's fury set,
With monstrous poppies spice the wine:
For only drunk are we divine,
And only mad shall we forget!

THE PARROT

TO ALFRED RAU

O BIRD grotesque and garrulous,
In green and scarlet liveried,
Thy ceaseless prattle hides from us
The secret of thy dream indeed.
But in thine eyeball's mystic bead
Are mirrored clear to them that read
Vague, nameless longings, like the breed
Of some exotic incubus.

Where is thy vision? Overseas?
In some bright tropic far-off land
Where chiding simians in tall trees
Swing by luxurious breezes fanned,
While at phantastic phallic feasts
Brown women uncouth idols hail,
And through the forest sounds the wail
Of the fierce matings of wild beasts?

Or are thine other memories,
Of other lives on other trees,
Encasements in some previous flesh
In far-off lost existences?

For, as the tiger leaves his spoor
Upon the prairie, firm and sure
Life writes itself upon the brain,
The soul keeps count of loss and gain,
And in the vibrant, living cells
Of the small parrot's brain there dwells
A sparkle of the flame benign
That makes the human mind divine.

The self-same Life-Force fashions us:
Its writings are the stars on high,
Its transient mansions thou as I.
Through Plato's mouth it speaks to us,
Through the earth's vermin even thus.
The heaving of a baby's breast
And the gyrations of the sun
To its omnipotence are one
And make its meaning manifest.

We both are wanderers through all time
Who, risen from the primal slime
When God blew life into the dust,
Press to some distant goal sublime.
And often through the thin soul-crust
Rush memories of an alien clime,
Of gorgeous revels more robust
Than any dream of hate or lust
In the gilt cage upon us thrust,
And visions strange beyond all rhyme.

The Life-Force with itself at war
  Moulds and remoulds us, blood and brain,
  Yet cannot quench us out again,
And after every change we *are*.
  The soul-spark in all sentient things
  Illumes the night of death and brings,
Remembered, immortality:
Time cannot take thy soul from thee!
  All living things are one by kind,
  Heritors of the cosmic mind.
Thus deemed the Prophet on whose knee
The kitten slumbered peacefully,
And surely good Saint Francis, he
  Who as his sister loved the hind.

THE PRISONING OF SONG

TO EDWARD J. WHEELER

THERE lay one weeping at Apollo's feet
Whose tuneful throat was like a golden well.
Her tears unutterably sweet
Made music as they fell.

"Thee have I served, O Father, all my days,
Yea, ere thy hand had made the lute-string and the lyre,
Out of my heart I snatched the terror and the fire,
And with my body wrought thy perfect praise.

"I am the rapture of the nightingale
Heavenward winging,
The song in singing,
Beauty audible.

"With rumbling thunder and discordance hideous
The gods and stars shall tumble from the sky,
But beauty's curve enmarbled lives in Phidias,
And Homer's numbers cannot die.

" To them that are my sisters thou hast given
  Eternity of bronze and script and stone.
I, only I, must perish, tempest-driven,
  In the great stillness where no moan
  Is heard, wind stirs, nor reed is blown."

Apollo wept.
  " Most sweet, most delicate,
Death fears that he might tarry at thy gate
  Too fond, too long,
  And that while listening he forget the throng
Who call upon him with their piteous cries.
  Thy sweetness, hence, in every song
Lives, and in each song dies."

He paused. Unlovely grief made dark
His shining countenance, when, mark!
  There rose the proud Promethean race
Unto whose voice the thunders hark,
Who sailing in a fragile bark
  Have seen the heavens face to face.

Their arms both lands and ocean span,
  They snare the lightning in a trice.
  Yea, by incredible device
They prison sound in curious shells,
And by these signs and miracles
Proclaim the masterhood of man.

O listen, all men, and rejoice,
For lo, Caruso's argent voice
  Endures as granite, even so,
And Garden's song, like Plato's thought,
Or like a mighty structure wrought
  By Michael Angelo!

And when the land is perished, yea,
  When life forsakes us, and the rust
Has eaten bard and roundelay,
  Still from the silence of the dust
Shall rise the song of yesterday!

GERSUIND

SOME amorous demon wrought your limbs
  Hewn out of moonwhite ivory;
  Over your visage restlessly
Flickers the semblance of a soul,
  And yet, queer wench, you are to me
More monstrous than the evil hymns
  The black priest chants in mockery,
With sound obscene and eyes that roll,
  Of the good Shepherd of the See.

Your voice is instant with a power,
  That, like thick incense, makes men mad.
  It is the voice the Tempter had,
Who whispered in an evil hour
  To Judah's king and Magdalen,
  And cried aloud in Sodom's men
For the two angels in the tower.

You smile upon me and your mouth
  Half opens like a great red flower
Athirsting in the hot sun's drouth.
  Before men's scorn you will not cower,

Your spirit quails not, neither squirms,
And yet your body is a bower
Where unclean wishes crawl like worms.

Black meres—the eyes, beneath your lashes
Dream, by life's fitful tide unstirred,
Save when some quick priapic word
Floods them with phantom lightning flashes
Whereof the thunder is not heard.
A thousand years of sick desire
Crouch like a beast that snarling lies,
Stung by some taunt to mortal ire,
In the abysses of those eyes!

Yet when I gazed upon you, child,
All bounds from us I fain had flung,
And bathed with healing tears and mild,
Your head so pitifully young.
But you, not knowing, would have smiled
And love's white roses smirched with dust,
Seeing each nerve in you defiled
Is vibrant with some nameless lust.

Lo! I have not the strength divine
Of Him whose bare feet ruled the sea,
To make your girl heart whole and free
And drive the devils into swine.

You must unto your dying day
  Still walk unsolaced and alone,
  Yea, and beyond, when to the bone
Your little breasts shall rot away.

Thus in the phosphorescent glow
  Of your corruption you shall lie
Until God's awful trumpets blow,
And all the sleepers, row by row,
  Each with the other, two by two,
Rise from their coffins, and the grave
  Spits forth the foulness that is you.

But in the universal spasm,
When the apocalyptic chasm
  Engulfs the water and the land,
Then I shall come and comfort you,
  Then I shall hold your shrunken hand
The grave has bitten through and through,
—With never nerve to twitch or goad—
  And then perhaps you'll understand
The kiss that I have not bestowed . . .
And ere God's hosts are marshalled bright
  And the last dreaded veil withdrawn,
I shall be with you in the night
  And pray until the doom of dawn.

NERO IN CAPRI

GO with the sun beyond the hill,
For you and me there is no thrill
In any rose of love or bud,
Nor any quickening of the blood.
Lo, from the tree of Good and Ill
Each strangest fruit our hand has wrung,
Lust's adder was around our throat,
And on our lips the hissing tongue.

No wanton queen by Cupid's grace
Shall snare me in her purple mesh,
I take mine eyes from Helen's face,
I tear my lips from Phryne's flesh.
Not mine that martyr's ecstasy
Who hellward for a kiss was hurled!
The ancient passions of the world
Quench not the bitter thirst of me.

The isles of Lesbos hide no dell
Where bides a rapture strange or new,
But white wan ghosts of dead sins dwell
In Capri's grottoes monstrous blue.
The books of Elephantis tell
Only the fortunes that befell

The son of Hermes and of her
Who wore the foam as vestiture,
And how young Leda's heart would stir
Beneath her plumèd paramour.

Stale is to me the thought thereof,
Of this man's sin and that man's love.
Ah, that the world had but one mouth
To kiss it as a madman doth!
Grant me the strength of all embraces
In the five circles of the globe!
Make mine each drop of blood that races,
Clothe me with romance as a robe!
Bring me the yearning of the dreams
Of all the young men amorous!
Bruise me with every breast that gleams
Beneath some hell-sent incubus!

Let madness rise in one bold gust,
And in the carnival of lust
Heap fire on fire, and coal on coal,
Join all things, thighs, and hips, and soul,
Until at last the panting earth
Shall tremble with conjugial mirth
Like a drunk wanton; till desire,
Heedless of scorpions and of rods,
Shall toss his splendid mane of fire
And smite your pale, anæmic gods!

Then, like a cyclopean brand
  That threatening rises from the deeps,
My passion's embers newly fanned
  Shall be a flame that sings and leaps,
With every bond of nature riven,
  And broken every gyve that bars,
In the concupiscence of heaven,
  And in the incest of the stars!

A BALLAD OF MONTMARTRE

WITHIN the graveyard of Montmartre
Where wreath on wreath is piled,
Where Paris huddles to her breast
Her genius like a child,
The ghost of Heinrich Heine met
The ghost of Oscar Wilde.

The wind was howling desolate,
The moon's dead face shone bright;
The ghost of Heinrich Heine hailed
The sad wraith with delight:
"Is it the slow worm's slimy touch
That makes you walk the night?

"Or rankles still the bitter jibe
Of fool and Pharisee,
When angels wept that England's law
Had nailed you to the Tree,
When from her brow she tore the rose
Of golden minstrelsy?"

Then spake the ghost of Oscar Wilde
While shrill the night hawk cried:

"Sweet singer of the race that bare
Him of the Wounded Side,
(I loved them not on earth, but men
Change somehow, having died).

"In Père La Chaise my head is laid,
My coffin-bed is cool,
The mound above my grave defies
The scorn of knave and fool,
But may God's mercy save me from
The Psychopathic School!

"Tight though I draw my cerecloth, still
I hear the din thereof
When with sharp knife and argument
They pierce my soul above,
Because I drew from Shakespeare's heart
The secret of his love. . . .

"Cite not Krafft-Ebing, nor his host
Of lepers in my aid,
I was sufficient as God's flowers
And everything He made;
Yea, with the harvest of my song
I face Him unafraid.

"The fruit of Life and Death is His;
He shapes both core and rind . . ."

Cracked seemed and thin the golden voice,
(The worm to none is kind),
While through the graveyard of Montmartre
Despairing howled the wind.

A BALLAD OF KING DAVID

AS David with Bath-Sheba lay,
Both drunk with kisses long denied,
The King, with quaking lips and gray,
Beheld a spectre at his side
That said no word nor went away.

Then to his leman spake the King,
The ghostly presence challenging:
"Bath-Sheba, erst Uriah's wife,
Thy lips are as the Cup of Life
That holds the purplest wine of God,
Too sweet for any underling."

"Yet," spake Bath-Sheba, sad of mien,
"Why from thy visage went the sheen
As though thy troubled eye had seen
A shadow, like a dead man's curse,
Rise threatening from the mound terrene?"

"'Twas but the falling dusk, that fills
The palace with phantastic ills.
Uriah sleeps in alien sands
Soundly. 'Tis not his ghost that stands,

Living or dead, or anything
'Twixt the King's pleasure and the King."

Bath-Sheba's glad heart rose, then fell:
" Where is it that thy fancies dwell?
Is there some maid in Israel
  Broad-hipped, with blue eyes like the sea,
Whose mouth is like a honey-cell,
  And sweeter than the mouth of me? "

" The pressure of thy lips on mine
Is exquisite like snow-cooled wine.
Over the wasteness of my life
  Thy love is risen like a sun:
All other loves that once seemed sweet
  Are seized by black oblivion."

Again upon the shadow-thing
He gazed in silence, questioning.
And lo! with quaint familiar ring
A spectral voice addressed the King:
  " O David, David, Judah's swan!
Why unto me dost thou this thing? "
  " Who art thou? "
" I am Jonathan,
  My heart is like a wounded fawn."

" When Saul's fierce anger, like a bull,
  Rose, by the Evil One made blind,

My love to thee was wonderful,
  Passing the love of womankind.
Hast thou forgotten everything
My heart aches in remembering?
Is such the harvest of our spring
Of war and love and lute-playing?

"Oh, why, such transient love to win
Bring on thy soul this heavy sin?
  Ah, happy they who die in grace,
  Ere time can mar their lovely face,
And their young hearts grow hard within!
  Yea, happy they who die as I,
  And as thine unborn child shall die.
Already at the palace gate
Stands Nathan with the word of fate!"

Was it a ghost's voice or the wind?
  For still Bath-Sheba, unaware,
Smiled. But King David ill in mind
  Scarce deemed her Beauty half so fair:
"Stale is the wine this evening,
  And sick with roses is the air!"
  He tore the garland from his hair,
  And left Bath-Sheba lying there
Perturbed, and vaguely wondering . . .

THE BALLAD OF THE GOLDEN BOY

FOR LEONARD ABBOTT

DA VINCI'S brow in curious lines
Of contemplation deep was knit.
Fair dreams before his eyes alit
Like water when the moonlight shines,
Or amber bees that come and flit:
How to make rare and exquisite
A pageant for the Florentines.

He beckoned to his page, a lad
Whose lips were like two crimson spots,
Eyes had he like forget-me-nots.
Yet all his boyhood sweet and glad
In frock of homely-spun was clad.

And of his multi-colored whims
The strangest thus the master told:
" Child, I shall crown thy head with gold,
And stain with gold thy lovely limbs.
For once in this sad age uncouth
The bloom of boyhood and of youth
Shall be with splendour aureoled."

The boy's heart leaped in one great bound.
"Thy gracious will," said he, "be done!"
And ere the lad was disengowned
The eager painter had begun
To clothe his hair with glory round
And make his visage like the sun.

Then, seven stars upon his breast,
And in his hands a floral horn,
Like a young king or like a guest
From heaven, riding on the morn,
Splendid and nude, the boy was borne
In triumph on the pageant's crest.

Like the sea surging on the beach,
Reverberant murmurs rise to greet
The masqueraders on the street.
But what is this? A learned leech
Hatless, dishevelled, runs to meet
The train. White terror halts his speech.

"Poor lad, my lad, for Heaven's pity,"
Shakes on the air a father's cry,
"Strip from thy flesh this gilded lie,
Else, for the pleasure of the city,
A self-slain Midas, thou must die!"

And terror smote the revelry.
The master's features white and sad

Twitched, yet no single word spake he,
  But full and straight rose up the lad,
Upon his lips curled wistfully
  The smile that Mona Lisa had.

" Good Sir," said he, " what mortal power
  In all the dark-winged years and fleet,
Could me, a lowly lad, endower
  With any boon more great, more sweet,
Than to have felt one epic hour
  A city's homage at my feet?

" By the slow tooth of time uneaten,
  And all the foul things that destroy,
From Life's mad game I rise unbeaten,
  Drenched with the wine of youth and joy,
  Great Leonardo's Golden Boy.

" Let this be told in song and story,
  Until the eyes of the world grow dim,
Till the sun's rays are wan, and hoary
  The ringlets of the cherubim,
That in my boyhood's glow and glory
  I died for Florence and for him.

" And when the damp and dreary mould
Full soon my little limbs shall hold,
  Let Leonardo's finger write
Upon my grave, in letters bold:

'His life was as a splash of gold
Against the plumage of the night.'"
Thus spake the lad; and onward rolled
The world's great pageant fierce and bright.

THE CYNIC'S CREDO

FROM the cloistered halls of knowledge where phantastic lights are shed
By a thousand twisted mirrors, and the dead entomb their dead,
Let us walk into the city where men's wounds are raw and red.
Three gifts only Life, the strumpet, holds for coward and for brave,
Only three, no more—the belly and the phallus and the grave!

When the slow disease of time writes on our face its horrid scrawl,
These be good gifts, these be real, let what will the rest befall,
Both the first gift and the second—but the last is best of all.
Faith and hope and friends desert us ere the cere-cloth's folds are drawn;
These remain while life remains and one remains when all are gone.

Who am I to judge the pander? Who are you to
damn the thief?
We are all but storm-tossed sailors stranded on the
selfsame reef.
Strip us of our fine-cut garments, smite us with
some primal grief,
Then behold us writhing naked, chain-bound to
our carcass, slave
To the belly and the phallus and (more kind than
God) the grave.

Why desire the stars in heaven, why ask more
when we have these?
Beast and bird shall be our comrades, we as they
may live in ease.
Not for us God's angel choir and His cosmic
silences!
Say not that we, too, are gods, since no god is
strong to save
From the hunger of the belly and the phallus and
the grave.

Saints and sinners all are brothers, none is happy
while a trace
Of divine and half-forgotten distant music makes
the race
Dream of freedom in the trap that holds the good
man and the base.

Like the worm that eats our substance, longing eats
our hearts: we crave
For a life beyond the belly and the phallus and
the grave.

Let us nurse no vain delusion! Feast on love and
wine and meat,
While girls' breasts blush into rosebuds and the
touch of flesh is sweet,
For the earth, our buxom mother, loves the sound
of dancing feet!
Though God cursed us with a glimmer of His
consciousness He gave
Still the belly and the phallus and life's final thrill
—the grave!

And who knows but the Almighty in His heart may
envy us?
If a little draught of knowledge makes man's life
so dolorous,
Then the crown of His omniscience is a crown of
thorns, and thus
Time that ends not broods on heaven, a gigantic
incubus.
We at least, through evolution climbing upward
from the cave,
Have the belly and the phallus and God's kindest
gift, the grave.

LIFE

THOU art the quick pulsation of the wine,
The laughter and the fever and the doom,
Skull crowned with roses, malady divine,
Dweller alike in cradle and in tomb!
Thine is the clangour of the ceaseless strife,
The agony of being, and the lust;
But Death thy bridegroom turns thy heart, O Life,
Whence thou hast risen, to the primal dust.

As one that loves a wanton knowing well
That she is false, I yield me to thy spell.
But when my cup is foaming to the brim,
Yea, when I dream that I have clasped the prize,
I see the scythe, and mark the face of him
That is thy lover, leering from thine eyes.

IRON PASSION

LOVE'S smiling countenance I know,
But not the anger of the god,
For I have wandered where Boccaccio
And Casanova trod.

I am aweary of these pleasant things,
The gallant dalliance and the well-watched fire.
Give me the magic of a thousand springs
That shook the blood of young Assyrian kings,
That stirs the young monk in his cell, and stings
Crimson and hot!
Wearing the crown of unassuaged desire,
Break me or bless me—only love me not!

Come as a wanton red with rouge and wine,
And I shall weave out of my song for thee
A purpler cloak than his
Who, hating, loved that Lesbia. Come to me
A saint—the halo shall be thine
Of Beatrice.

There is no joy in tender loves or wise,
No sweet in wrong:
Come unto me with cruel, loveless eyes,
O iron passion of the lords of song!

INHIBITION

TO MY PARENTS

O FOR the blithesomeness of birds
Whose soul floods ever to their tongue!
But to be impotent of words
With blinding tears and heart unstrung!

Each breeze that blows from homeward brings
To me who am so far away
The memory of tender things
I might have said and did not say.

Like spirit children, wraiths unborn
To luckless lovers long ago,
Shades of emotion, mute, forlorn,
Within my brain stalk to and fro.

When to my lips they rush, and call,
A nameless something rears its head,
Forbidding, like the spectral wall
Between the living and the dead.

O guardian of the nether mind
Where atavistic terrors reel
In dark cerebral chambers, bind
Old nightmares with thy mystic seal!

But bar not from the sonant gate
  Of being with thy fiery sword
The sweetest thing we wring from fate:
  Love's one imperishable word!

ON BROADWAY

GREAT jewels glitter like a wizard's rain
Of pearl and ruby in the women's hair.
And all the men—each drags a golden chain,
As though he walked in freedom. In the glare,
Luxurious-cushioned wheels a revel-train
Where kings of song with weary feet have trod,
Where Poe, sad priest to Beauty and to Pain,
Bore through the night the Vision and the God.

And yet, perhaps, in this assemblage vast,
In some poor heart sounds the enraptured chord,
And staggering homeward from a hopeless quest
The God-anointed touched me, meanly dressed,
And, like a second Peter, I have passed
Without salute the vessel of the Lord.

THE UNKNOWN GODDESS

ONE day I stopped at a bookvender's place,
And, as a woman fingering old lace,
Caressed the volumes holding daintily
The treasure-troves of all the world for me.
Though flesh clothe not their fond imaginings,
The dreams of poets are as living things. . . .
By Socrates' and Plato's "Soul" I found
"Mam'selle de Maupin" in rich saffron bound.
And wrangling still about the old affair
The lad and lady of the "Sonnets" were,
While Laura smiled to Beatrice; when he
Who marshalled all this ghostly company,
The clerk, I say, drew me aside, and thus
He spake to me: "A lady beauteous
Your book, O Poet, deems most exquisite,
And asks you please to write your name in it."
"Who can it be?"
"That may I not reveal.
She lives in splendor; dizzy motors reel
At her command, beside an equipage,
And oh! her town-house is a queen's ménage!"
I acquiesced, and in my book, my own,
Inscribed a greeting to the fair unknown.

But now I know 'twas magic, 'twas a snare!
If to a witch you give a strand of hair
She draws you by it over land and sea—
Thus, Unknown Lady, are you drawing me!

The ancient Greeks for honeyed lips unkissed,
For far-off things still hidden in time's mist,
For hopes obscure, mysterious vows and odd,
Upreared an altar to the Unknown God!
Thus in my heart I raise a shrine to you,
O Unknown Goddess of Fifth Avenue!
No maiden fair my vagrant heart can thrill,
For you I know not must be fairer still . . .
You are my mistress, and to you belong
The passion and the vision and the song.
Both day and night I wonder who you are,
If you obey some far phantastic star?
Are your hands lilies? Is their fragrance sweet?
And shall I know you when at last we meet?
Out of the night, O Goddess, send a sign
And prove to me you are indeed divine!

THE VIRGIN SPHINX

TO MURIEL RICE

FROM what strange tomb is thy strange knowledge blown,
Borne on the wings of what Chimæra's brood?
Thine is her secret whom the Serpent wooed,
And his who kindled passion in a stone.
Art thou her child, whom Egypt calls her own,
Her lore's gray guardian hewn in granite rude?
Has she, perchance, in a maternal mood,
Revealed to thee her musings vast and lone?

Indifferent of things human and the years,
Cerebral still and granite still, she blinks
Through half-closed lids perennially wise . . .
But thou, O virgin daughter of the Sphinx,
Grant God that Love may scorch thee with his tears,
And kiss her ancient wisdom from thine eyes!

THE NUNS

TO DOROTHY RICE

[*Suggested by her Painting at the Independent Artists Exhibition, 1910*]

A WOODLAND cloister rude and desolate,
Grim shapes of anguish hooded in despair:
Half-crazed with horror, yet enthralled, they stare
Where, fallen hellward from his holy state,
The pale young priest beside the altar stands.
Unto the night his gibbering lips rehearse
A litany satanic and perverse.
The golden monstrance shudders in his hands . . .

They dare not call upon the Holy Name,
Lest, crashing as the thunder on the main,
God's anger smite them with His sword of flame.
And so they leer, eternally the same,
Called in what crevice of thy tortured brain,
Prodigious child, from nothingness to pain?

QUEEN LILITH

"LADY of mystery, what is thy history?
Where is the rose God gave to thee,
Where is thy soul's virginity?"
"Lord, my Lord, is thy speech a sword?
What is it thou wouldst have of me?"

"There are pleasant passes of tender grasses
Where the kine may browse and the wild she-asses,
Between the hills and the deep salt sea,
But where is the spot that is branded not
With the Sign of the Beast on thy fair body?"

"Lord, my Lord, ask thy Scarlet Horde!
Who spilt my love and my life like wine?
Who threw my body as bread to swine?
If my sins in heaven be seventy times seven,
What between heaven and hell are thine?"

"Lady, where is it thy fancies hover,
With wolves' eyes prying restlessly
For some naked thing that they might discover,
Some strange new sin or some strange new lover,
Beyond the lover who lies with thee?"

" Lord, my Lord, who has struck the chord
That holds my heart in a spider's mesh?
Prince of the soul's satiety,
Whence springs that hunger beyond the flesh,
That only the flesh can appease in me?"

" By the love of a love that is strange as myrrh,
By the kiss that kills and the doom that smileth,
By my cloven hoof and my fiery spur,
Thou art my sister, the Lady Lilith,
I am——"
" My brother Lucifer!"

" I am thy lover, I am thy brother,
Time cannot prison us, space cannot smother,
Proudest of Jahveh's kindred we,
Whom Chaos, the terrific mother,
Begot from stark Eternity.

" I am the cry of the earth that beguileth
God's trembling hosts though they loathe my name,
The dauntless foe of His loaded game!
But where is the tomb that had hidden Lilith,
Of the Deathless Worm and the Quenchless Flame?

" I hunted thee where the Ibis nods,
From the Brocken's crag to the Upas Tree,

My lonesomeness was as great as God's,
When He cast us out from His Holy See,
But now at the last thou art come to me!

"Let Mary of Bethlehem lord it in Heaven,
While stringèd beads her seraphs tell,
(How art thou fallen, Gabriel!)
Thy bridesmaids shall be the Deadly Seven,
And I will make thee a queen in Hell!"

2. SAMUEL, I. 26

TO T. E. H.

GOD'S iron finger wrote the law
  Upon an adamantine scroll
That thrilled my life with tender awe
  When first I met you soul to soul.

Thence springs the great flame heaven-lit,
  Predestined when the world began,
Whereby my heart to yours is knit
  As David's was to Jonathan.

ENIGMA

TO A. L.

A MOUTH more strange than Mona Lisa's is.
Deep eyes where dreams an infinite despair
In the blue shadow of mysterious hair
That crowned the temples of Semiramis!
Thine is the smile that murders with a kiss
Of her whose body was a perfect prayer
To Ashtoreth, and all the mysteries
Of all the queens of all the East are there.

This age of brass has sealed thy soul with fears,
And prudence blights thy poppies like a pall:
Perchance thy words might move the world to tears,
And thy great secret save or sear us all:
But round about thee—an enchanted wall—
The silence hovers of a thousand years.

A LITTLE MAID OF SAPPHO

O LITTLE siren of the rose-white skin,
Reared to strange music and to stranger sin,
With scornful lips that move to no man's plea—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!
Beneath long lashes downcast eyes and coy,
Yet uninitiate to no secret joy!
O bud burst open ere her day begun,
The virgin and the strumpet blent in one!
Come close to me! Lay your small hand in mine,
And drink the music of my words like wine.
And let me touch your little breasts that swell
With joy remembered where her kisses fell . . .
Ah! she whose wise caressive fingers strike
Your heart-strings and the cithara alike!
By what love-potion is your passion fanned,
What is the magic of that wary hand?
What is the secret of her strange caress,
Fierce, tortured kisses, or the tenderness
That woman gives to woman—flame or snow?
I, too, can kiss or bruise you. You shall know
That love like mine is delicate as hers,
Or madder still, to madder passion stirs,
That shall consume you like some fiery sea—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!

Or is it song that sets your blood on fire?
Behold in me no novice to the lyre.
Who is this woman Sappho? I can sing
Like her of Eros. Yea, each voiceless thing,
The very rocks of Mytilene's strand
Shall be made vocal at your sweet command.
Hers but the cooing of the Lesbian lutes,
Mine every passion in the heart that roots.
Albeit your sweetness lives in Sappho's song,
Her love is barren . . . and the years are long.
And how she sang, and how she loved and erred,
Only by moonsick women will be heard.
The lyric thunder that my hand has hurled
Shall ring with resonant music through the world,
Quickening the blood in every lover's breast,
And then your beauty on my glory's crest
Shall ride, a goddess, to eternity—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!

Unscathed in Love's dominion I have been,
And still a sceptic kissed the mouth of Sin.
Love seemed the dreariest of all things on earth
Until my passion filled your heart with mirth!
Like frightened bird my cynic wisdom flies
Before the cruel candour of your eyes.
As for sweet rain a valley sick with drouth,
Thus thirsts my love for your indifferent mouth!

And still your thoughts are wandering to the dell
Where Sappho walks and where her minions
dwell . . .
Be then, of maidens most corrupt, most chaste,
The one delight that I shall never taste!
And through the dreary æons yet unborn
The love of you shall rankle like a thorn!
Leave one last thrill for my sad heart to crave
In the ennui of heaven or the grave! . . .
Incite my passion, my embraces flee—
And never, never, never come to me!

O listen, listen to my heart-beat's call!
Aught else I say, it is not true at all.
She has her maidens whom her soft ways woo,
And they to her are no less dear than you.
For your dear sake I gladly fling aside
Laurels and loves! A beggar stripped of pride,
I only know I need you more than she—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!

CHILDREN OF LILITH

TO FRANÇOIS VILLON

NOW tell me, Villon, where is he,
Young Sporus, lord of Nero's lyre,
Who marked with languid ecstasy
The seven hills grow red with fire?
And he whose madness choked the hall
With roses and made night of day?
Rome's rulers for an interval,
Its boyish Cæsars, where are they?

Where is that city by the Nile,
Reared by an emperor's bronze distress
When the enamoured crocodile
Clawed the Bithynian's loveliness?
The argent pool whose listening trees
Heard Echo's voice die far away?
Narcissus, Hylas, Charmides,
O brother Villon, where are they?

Say where the Young Disciple roved
When the Messiah's blood was spilt?
None knows: for he whom Jesus loved
Was not the rock on which He built.

And tell me where is Gaveston,
The second Edward's dear dismay?
And Shakespeare's love, and Jonathan,
O brother Villon, where are they?

Made—for what end?—by God's great hand,
Frail enigmatic shapes, they dwell
In some phantastic borderland,
But on the hitherside of hell!
Children of Lilith, each a sprite,
Yet wrought like us of Adam's clay,
And when they haunt us in the night
What, brother Villon, shall we say?

LOVE'S AFTERMATH

ONE summer afternoon
We strangled Love, and soon
There where my love had been,
Upon the couch, was Sin.

The face is still the same,
But an unholy flame
Gleams in her eyes that serves
To whip my angry nerves.

Upon affection's tomb
Miasmic blossoms bloom.
Whims monstrous and perverse
Those girlish lips rehearse.

Her body seems the shrine
Of some strange Messaline,
And all the lusts of men
That tortured Magdalen.

And when beside me stirs
That soft white form of hers,
A voice cries out to me:
For love's sake, set her free!

At last I understand
Who with untrembling hand
Destroy a lovely shell,
To save the soul from hell!

THE SINGING VAMPIRE

THOU art no goddess risen clean
From the infatuated brine;
Nay, rather an exotic queen,
A dark, low-templed Messaline,
Dumb till some human sacrifice
Be spilt upon her monstrous shrine:
With tears and blood we paid the price
Of all those golden songs of thine.

Life of an hundred victims throbs
In thy enchantments fierce, uncouth,
And through thy rose-red passion sobs
The pallid wraith of ruined youth.
Within thy bosom's labyrinth
Has not the monster had his fill?
Why slay this stainless Hyacinth?
Are there not *men* to do thy will?

And, though thy hungry eyes had rein
Upon his boyish throat and hips,
His sweet young self thou shalt not drain,
Nor bruise him with thy cruel lips.

Fate's arm against thy heart shall thrust
The sabre of thine ancient wrong,
O man-devouring queen of lust!
O scarlet mouth of tuneful song!

And men shall shun thee as the pest
That see thy blood-red mouth—and know,
And though thou beat thine arid breast
Yet neither milk nor song shall flow.
The asp of unassuaged desire
Within thy famished flanks must dwell,
Doomed to endure till all things tire,
In an eternal songless hell.

THE MASTER KEY

TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

TWO loves have I, both children of delight:
One is a youth, like Eros' self, to whom
My heart unfolds, as lotus blossoms bloom
When her mysterious service chants the Night;
And one is like a poppy burning bright.
Her strong black tresses bind the hands of doom,
She is a wraith from some imperial tomb,
Of love enhungered, in the grave's despite.

Lord, though thou be, O Shakespeare, of all rhyme,
Life is more strong than any song of thine.
For thou wast thrall to circumstance, and Care
With rankling poison marred thy singing time:
From hell's own lees I still crush goodly wine,
And like a Greek, and smiling, flout despair!

THE PILGRIM

THERE knocked One nightly at the harlot's house;
Wan was His mouth as kisses without love.
His groping fingers followed tremulous
The winding of her delicate thin veins;
He traced the waxen contour of her breast,
And then, as baffled in some strange pursuit,
Drew her to Him in weariest embrace;
And, as she shuddered in His grasp, He watched,
Still passionless, the working of her throat.
The woman's cheek grew crimson as He gazed,
But He, a scowling and disgruntled guest,
Rose white and famished from her body's feast.
Yet one night, pausing half-way, He turned back,
Lured by the wraith of long-departed hope;
And then He asked of her a monstrous thing . . .
The strumpet blanched and, rising from the couch,
Spat in His face.
Straightway the Stranger's eye
Blazoned exultant with the pilgrim's joy
When ends the quest. He lifted up His hands
In quiet benediction, and a light
Miraculous upon His forehead shone.

But she, being blind, still cursed Him, and reviled:
" Albeit I sell my body for very shame
I am a woman, not a beast; but thou——"
" And I," quoth he, " a Seeker after God."

POEMS FROM PLAYS

THE PRINCESS WITH THE GOLDEN VEIL

FROM "THE VAMPIRE," BY GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK AND EDGAR ALLAN WOOLF

FOR MARGARET EDITH HEIN

THUS spake the King to Marygold,
His speech was soft with many sighs:
"Why, Princess, may not I behold
The wonder of your star-lit eyes?
Your veil, Beloved, is the cloud
Of amber that obscures the sun.
Strange is the vow that bids you shroud
Your sweetness like a sad-faced nun.

"Perhaps some spirit wrought with guile
Around your heart a magic spell.
Behind the veil you weep and smile,
Perhaps you hate me—who can tell?
Your lips are silent as the grave,
And with strange fear my cheek is pale;
Have mercy on the King, your slave,
O Princess with the Golden Veil!

"Thrice hallowed was the glorious hour
When through the veil I felt your breath,

More fragrant than a passion flower,
Dear as a mother's words at death.
Yet the sad thought beyond control
Gnaws at my heart, and eats and grips,
That I have never known your soul,
Or read the secret from your lips.

" And never shall I understand,
And men shall hope and strive and fail,
Until some Prince from Fairyland
Shall kiss your mouth and lift the veil.
And, though my heart be black with night,
My regal lips that may not quail,
Shall smile as Arthur's, when his sight
In guiltless hands beheld the Grail—
O Princess with the Golden Veil! "

JOAN'S FAREWELL

ENGLISHED FOR MAUDE ADAMS FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER

FAREWELL, ye hills, ye pastures dearly loved,
Ye quiet homely valleys, fare ye well!
For Joan henceforth shall know your ways no more,
Joan to you all must bid a long farewell!
Ye meadows I have watered, and ye trees
That I have planted, wear your gladsome green!
Farewell, ye grottoes, and ye cooling springs!
Sweet Echo, thou the valley's lovely voice,
Oft though my heart for thy response may yearn,
Joan goes, and never—never—shall return!

Dear tranquil scenes of all my joyful days,
I leave you now behind forevermore!
Poor, foldless lambs, go ye in unknown ways,
And walk unherded where the nightbirds soar!
For I am called another flock to graze
On fields of peril in the battle's roar.
I must obey the Spirit's high decree:
Earth-born ambition has no part in me.

He that to Moses upon Horeb's height
  Descended fiery on the bush of flame,
Commanding him to stand in Pharaoh's sight;
  Who once to Israel's pious shepherd came,
And made the lad His champion in the fight;
  Loves to exalt a lowly shepherd's name.
He hailed me from the branches of this tree,
" Go forth! Thou shalt on earth my witness be!

" Rude brass for garment shall thy soft limbs wear,
  In clasp of iron shall thy heart be pressed,
Ne'er in thine eyes shall seem a man's face fair
  Or light the flame of mortal love unblessed!
Never the bride-wreath shall adorn thy hair,
  Nor lovely baby blossom at thy breast,
But thou shalt be War's sacrificial bride
Above all earthly women glorified!

" When the most brave in battle shall despair,
  When ruin threatens, and all hope seems vain,
Thine arms aloft mine oriflamme shall bear;
  And, as the skilful reaper fells the grain,
Thou shalt mow down our foemen everywhere,
  And turn Fate's chariot backward by thy rein!
Unto all France shalt thou deliverance bring,
And, freeing Rheims, in triumph crown the King!"

The Heavenly Spirit promised me a sign,
  He sends the helmet, for it comes from *Him!*

Its iron thrills me with the strength divine
  That fans the courage of the Cherubim;
And, as the raging whirlwind whips the brine,
  It drives me forth to lead the combat grim.
The chargers rear and trembling paw the ground,
The war-cry thunders and the trumpets sound!

CHANTECLER'S ODE TO THE SUN

(AFTER THE FRENCH OF ROSTAND)

MOTHER, whose great love dries the tears
Of every little weed that grows,
And makes a living butterfly
Of the dead petals of the rose,
And of the almond blossoms bright
In the fair vale of Rousillon
That tremble in the scented breeze
Blown downward from the Pyrenees,
Lo, I adore thee, Mistress Sun!

Beneath thy kiss the honey ripes,
Thy blessing is on every brow;
In every flower's little heart,
In every hovel, there art thou!
The meanest creatures in God's world
Share in thy beneficial fire,
But, even as a mother's love,
Divided, thou art still entire.

With humble pride I chant thy praise,
My priesthood thou wilt not disdain,

Hast thou not bathed thy radiant face
  In water gathered from the rain,
Made blue with curious dye, wherein
  Fine linen is made clean from stain?
Thy last farewell is often thrown
  Upon a lowly window pane.

The yellow sunflower turns to thee
  Her radiant countenance in prayer,
My brother on the steeple boasts
  Of golden plumes when thou art there;
And gliding through the linden tree
  Thou draw'st strange circles on the ground
Too delicate to tread upon,
  Save for some sprite in silver gowned.

Thou mak'st a rare enamelled thing
  Of the brown pitcher cracked and old,
The common tools of farm and yard
  Are by thy radiance aureoled.
And, where but now a rag was seen,
  A glorious banner is unrolled,
The hayrick and its little mate,
  The beehive, wear a hood of gold.

Glory to thee upon the fields,
  And glory on the vineyards high!
Thrice blessed thou art upon the door,
  Thrice blessed on herb and grass and sky.

I bless thee in the lizard's eyes,
And on the pinions of the swan.
Thou speak'st to us in little things
As in the vastness of the dawn.

Thy mandate, Sun, has called to life,
The sombre sister of the light
Who humbly cowers at the feet
Of all things shining, all things bright.
For thou hast given unto them
A shadow, dancing like an elf,
That often seems unto the eye
More lovely than the thing itself.

I worship thee: thy holy light
Charms lilies from the crusty sod,
Thy presence sanctifies the brook,
In every bush thou show'st us God!
Thy splendor makes the tree divine,
And lends new wonder to the star,
Save for thy love, O Mother Sun,
All things would seem but what they are!

THE BREEZE

(AFTER THE FRENCH OF ZAMAÇOIS)

THE breeze that stirs in yonder tree
And the young roses rocks to sleep,
Wafts to my mind the memory
Of a young Zephyr who would sweep
Across the land with fellows gay,
Winged with the wind like them, and bent
On fond adventure, who one May
(O wine of spring, O golden day!)
Traversed a castle's battlement,
And on the terrace, spinning there,
He found a child divinely fair,
(O lovely maid with sun-kissed hair!)
Swift drawing from an ivory loom
A thread more soft than gossamer.
Her eyes were bluer in his sight
Than the enchanted azure mere
Which on that morning in his flight
His wings had grazed, and crystal-clear.

And as he loosed a golden strand
From her dear head, she raised a hand
And looked and laughed, and brushed it back

So sweet, so chaste, so debonair,
That the young Breeze, who had no lack
  Of conquests in the heights above
Among the damsels of the air,
  And danced a pirouette with Love,
Felt that his heart was held for e'er
By that sweet child divinely fair,
(O sea-blue eyes, O sun-kissed hair!)
Whose lily hands were spinning there
A weft more soft than gossamer.

Surely no tale beneath the sun
  More dainty could or stranger be,
Than how that maid a lover won
  Whose countenance she could not see.
He was content unknown to stir
  About the spinner and the loom,
And, as he could not bring to her
  The trees and flowers all abloom,
He wafted shoals of butterflies
  With wings of silver to her room.
Blue, red and golden butterflies
  He blew into her hair, and then
When she caressed them with her eyes,
  In fury drove them out again.
The scent of new-mown hay he brought
  That peasants garner in the fields,
And marjoram and meadow-sweet
  And every fair the garden yields

In all the pleasant realm of France:
  Forget-me-nots and rosemary
And orange-blossoms from Provence.
These and full many perfumes rare
He ravished from the summer air
For his young love divinely fair,
(O sea-blue eyes, O sun-kissed hair!)
  Smiling, and spinning at the wheel
The weft more soft than gossamer.

Full beakers of the sunshine gold
  He dashed in winter on her cheeks;
And, in the sultry summer night,
  Cool snow-drifts from the mountain peaks.
When over courtly tale she pored
  By pious monk or poet sage,
He stood behind the lady's chair,
  Unbeckoned oft, to turn her page.
And, when the lovely maiden slept
  Within her satin-curtained bed,
He would caress her honeyed locks
  And call sweet blessings on her head.
And in the watches of the night
  Once, in an ecstasy of bliss,
He breathed upon her dimpled mouth
  The thing that mortals call a kiss.
Alas! One day from Aquitaine,
  Upon an ebon-colored mare,

Rode proudly to the castle's gate
A gallant noble, young and fair.
And he was smitten with great love
(O sea-blue eyes, O sun-kissed hair!)
When he beheld the lady there
Spinning a bridal gown more white
And softer still than gossamer.

He gave her pearls her throat to grace,
And bracelets for her tender wrist;
How can the sweetest breeze prevail
O'er ruby ring and amethyst?
When it was known that she would wed
The fair young lord from Aquitaine,
The Zephyr lashed the castle wall,
And day and night he sobbed in pain.
He murdered every rose there bloomed
That none might deck her bridal train.
When came that office most divine
He beat, in impotent despair,
Against the chapel's holy shrine,
And from the chalice drank the wine.
When for the bride divinely fair
(O sea-blue eyes, O sun-kissed hair!)
In rich brocade and satin shoon
And veils more soft than gossamer,
The bells intoned a marriage rune,
He flew into the sexton's face
Until they jangled out of tune.

Then to the desert wild he sped,
  Heart-broken, anguished and alone.
Before his rage the camels fled,
  The turbaned merchants feared his moan.
He raced across the glacial seas
  With the great cyclones of the world;
And, ever waxing, angrily
  Both beast and bird before him whirled.
At last, still panting from the race,
Back to fair France he turned his face
  To break the castle's granite tower,
And of its splendor leave no trace.
But lo! within the creaking walls
  That he had entered to destroy,
He found, more frail than any flower
  And fairer far, a baby boy.
Infinities of love and trust
  Within the mother's eyes he read,
And trembled lest he harm one hair
  Upon the infant's golden head.
He pined away in one sweet breath,
Content to find both peace and death
  Beside the mother still more fair,
  (O sea-blue eyes, O sun-kissed hair!)
  Patiently smiling, spinning there
  A baby's gown of gossamer.

AVE TRIUMPHATRIX

I

ATTAR OF SONG

LIKE Lilith, mother Lilith, I have wound
About my heart the serpent of desire.
A purple galleon on a sea of fire
Has borne my footsteps to forbidden ground,
Where glittering with corruption all the time,
Death in its shadow, dreams the Upas tree;
But with its dew, as sugar sucks the bee,
I have enriched the honeycomb of rhyme.

A riot of strange roses is my life—
Pale as Narcissus gazing wistfully,
And crimson red as the great Rose of Strife
Upon the zone of Menelaus' wife,—
Distilled by love with lyric alchemy,
Heart of my heart, into one song for thee.

II

THE BURIED CITY

MY heart is like a city of the gay
Reared on the ruins of a perished one,
Wherein my dead loves cower from the sun,
White-swathed like kings, the Pharaohs of a day.
Within the buried city stirs no sound
Save for the bat, forgetful of the rod,
Perched on the knee of some deserted god,
And for the groan of rivers underground.

Stray not, my Love, 'mid the sarcophagi
Tempt not the silence . . . for the fates are deep,
Lest all the dreamers deeming doomsday nigh
Leap forth in terror from their haunted sleep;
And, like the peal of an accursèd bell,
Thy voice call ghosts of dead things back from hell!

III

THE IDOL

WHEN from thy heart the altar veil was drawn
I saw an idol on a golden throne.
Upon his forehead burned a ruby stone,
His visage was more awful than the dawn.
He made the heavens a loincloth for his hips,
Within the hand he lightly held the globe,
But the design upon his mystic robe
Was as the Beast of the Apocalypse.

God's sons, dear heart, no longer mate with man.
I too, once caught in Satan's black trapan,
Bowed to an idol from an alien star,
But through the clouds of incense sick with myrrh
Spied on his brow the sign of Lucifer:
The crimson ruby was a crimson scar!

IV

TRIUMPHATRIX

AS some great monarch in triumphal train
Holds in his thrall an hundred captive kings,
Guard thou the loves of all my vanished springs
To wait as handmaids on thy sweet disdain.
And thou shalt wear their tresses like bright rings,
For their defeat perpetuates thy reign!
With thy imperious girlhood vie in vain
The pallid hosts of all old poignant things.

Place on thy brow the mystic diadem
With women's faces cunningly embossed,
Whereon each memory glitters like a gem;
But mark that mine were regal loves that lost
And loved like queens, nor haggled for the cost—
And having conquered, oh be kind to them!

V

AT NIGHTFALL

SWEET is the highroad when the skylarks call,
When we and Love go rambling through the land.
But shall we still walk gaily hand in hand
At the road's turning and the twilight's fall?
Then darkness shall divide us like a wall,
And uncouth evil nightbirds flap their wings;
The solitude of all created things
Will creep upon us shuddering like a pall.

This is the knowledge I have wrung from pain:
We, yea, all lovers, are not one, but twain,
Each by strange wisps to strange abysses drawn.
But through the black immensity of night
Love's little lantern, as a glow-worm's bright,
May lead our steps to some stupendous dawn.

VI

FINALE

HOW changed the house is when not Love is there!
Your deep eyes vex me like some magic book
I cannot ponder. Nay, I will not brook
The weariness of your too golden hair!
Hush! Was not that the creaking of a stair?
Was it Love's footfall or the wind? I look
In vain for him in every hidden nook—
There is no sound of laughter anywhere . . .

Ah, sweet, he has forsaken us, not base,
But heedless, boyish—and the world is wide!
He sees not now your sorrow-haunted face,
Nor feels the dagger that has pierced my side,
And how all joy is vanished from the place
As from a house in which a child has died.

A NEW ENGLAND BALLAD

A NEW ENGLAND BALLAD

FOR ALEXANDER HARVEY

HE saw the drab and dreary town
  Upon the mirthless Sabbath day;
  All pleasant things had crept away
Like serfs before the master's frown;
The very trees their heads hung down
  Upon the mirthless Sabbath day.

Through joy-deserted streets He trod,
  The church bells tolling mournfully.
  There was no sound of childish glee,
No peal of laughter praising God
Hailed Him that loved the little ones
  From Judah unto Galilee.

Barred in His name the magic bower
  Of mimic kings and queens that seem,
  Where still the fairy-jewels gleam,
And sonant for a little hour—
From faded parchment conjured up
  Incarnate walks the poet's dream.

But through a gate obscure and small
He watched a pale-faced stripling crawl

Into a closely-shuttered place
Where Magdalens untouched of grace
Held their unlovely festival,
Wearing the hunted look, uncanny,
Of them that love not much but many.

And right across the house of guilt
Where sweet young lips were made all-wise
In unchaste knowledge, and the wine
Of glorious youth was hourly spilt—
Grinning upon Him like a skull,
With windows bare like sightless eyes,
There rose the House Unbeautiful
Wherein God's holy shrine was built.

And buzzing like a swarm of bees
Around the church's open door,
In long frock coats and tall silk hats,
The sleek, the oily Pharisees
With the complacent smile of yore—
Dear God, how He remembered these!

Upon a cross of ebony
He saw His image painted bleak
With pallid lips that seemed to speak:
" My God, thou hast forsaken me! "
Such was the symbol of their faith—
Not like a godhead, like a wraith
Convulsed with futile agony,
Wherefrom no man might solace seek.

There was no incense in the air,
  Never a sweet-faced acolyte,
No priest in sacrificial dress
  Trailing with colors strange and bright;
No organ sounded pæans there,
  No candelabrum shed its light.
No gleam of hope . . . of loveliness,
  Of awe . . . or beauty anywhere.

Beside the tabernacle stood,
  Choked with things hateful that destroy,
  A weazened parson cursing Joy;
And in his veins there flowed no blood.
Upon his tongue were words of grace,
  Yet every time he spake afresh
  He drove a nail into His flesh,
And praying . . . spat into His face!

And, while his curses poured like showers
  Upon all things that men hold fair:
The pearls, the satin and the flowers,
  Life's graces, perfumed, debonair,
With voice of thunder spake the Master:
  "*Hold, parson! Cease thy blasphemy!*"
  "Who art thou, stranger?"
    "*I am He*
Who suffered her of Magdala
  With the smooth satin of her hair
  To dry His consecrated feet.

And break for Him the alabaster
That held the spikenard rare and sweet."

The weazened parson deaf and blind
Proceeded of God's wrath to tell,
And of a lad, of one who fell
Through his hot blood and fates unkind,
Whom to the terrors of God's Hell
And to His vengeance he consigned.
Again the voice rose threateningly:
"*Hold, parson! Cease thy blasphemy!*"
"Who art thou, stranger?"
"*I am He*
Who in the wilderness forsaken,
There having felt temptation's spur,
Forgave one in adultery taken
And bade ye throw no stone at her!"

And still the parson cursed and whined,
And thus he spoke to womankind:
"Vileness and sin of every shape
Lure in the ferment of the grape.
Seize by the root the fruit malign
That turns all good men into swine!"
"*Impious parson, on thy knee!*
How dare ye judge your Maker? He
Am I who at His mother's sign,
And for her glory, turned the water
In the six water-pots to wine!

"I am who through the bigot's pride
Of righteous fools is crucified.
All lovely things, if these be slain,
Then were My sacrifice in vain!
For man is not the devil's booty,
Not Mine the scorpion and the rod,
Not sorrow is your heavy duty,
And they that worship Him in beauty
And gladness . . . are most dear to God.

"Men of the New World, heed Me, bliss
And all God's good gifts are your gain!
From Old World nightmares cleanse your brain:
Columbus has not crossed the main
To open up new worlds to pain!
But he and they who tell you this,
Good folk, betray you with a prayer
As they betrayed Me with a kiss!"

And like mysterious music died
His accents on the shivering air;
And through the heavens opening wide
He vanished where no man might follow.
Roses for thorns were in His hair,
And on His visage, dwelling there,
Those who beheld Him saw, enticed,
The awful beauty of Apollo,

The loving kindness which is Christ—
But, choked with visions that destroy,
Still by the cross the parson stood,
A gibbering madman, cursing Joy!

THE PLAINT OF EVE

THE PLAINT OF EVE

TO BLANCHE SHOEMAKER WAGSTAFF

"MAN'S mate was I in Paradise,
Since of the fruit we twain did eat,
Through the slow toiling days his slave.
Because I asked for truth, God gave
All the world's anguish and the grave.
But, being merciful and wise,
He bade His angel bathe mine eyes
With the salt dew of sorrow. Sweet
Had been the dew of Paradise."

Yet through the immemorial years,
Has she not healed us with her tears?

" Albeit upon my lips I wore
A smile, my heart was ever sore.
Because I heard the Serpent hiss,
Therefore I suffered patiently.
But now I pray for bread, and ye
Give me a stone or worse—a kiss."

Shall not the stone rebound on us?
Shall not the kiss prove venomous?

" No expiation dearly won,
Can turn the ancient loss to gain,
The Son of Man was Mary's Son . . .
Have I not borne the child in pain?
My sighs were mingled with His breaths!
Yet, though I died a thousand deaths,
A thousand times a thousandfold,
With Him, my babe, upon the Cross,
My bloody sweats are never told,
And still the world's gain is my loss."

Has she not suffered, has not died,
With every creature crucified?

" The hallowed light of Mary's eyes
Within my bosom never dies.
The learned Faust, for all his pride,
Was saved by Gretchen—glorified—
To God, his master, thrice denied.
Love's smallest holy offices
When have I shirked them, even these?
From the grey dawn when time began
To the Crimean battle-field,
By every wounded soldier's side
With cool and soothing hands I kneeled."

She is the good Samaritan
Upon life's every battle-field.

"The secret book of Beauty was
Unlocked through me to Phidias.
Petrarcha's dream and Raphael's,
Rossetti's blessèd damozels,
And all men's visions live in me.
The shadow queens of Maeterlinck,
Clothed with my soft flesh, cross the brink
Of utter unreality.
Rautendelein and Juliet,
Who shall their wistful smile forget?
The leader of my boyish band
I rule in Neverneverland."

Hers is the sweetest voice in France,
And hers the sob that like a lance
Has pierced the heart of Italy.

"With stylus, brush and angelot,
I seize life's pulses, fierce and hot.
In Greece, a suzerain of song,
The swallow was my singing mate,
My lyric sisters still prolong
My strain more strange than sea or fate.
Though Shakespeare's sonnets, sweet as wine,
Were not more 'sugared' than were mine,
Ye who with myrtle crown my brow,
Withhold the laurel even now."

The world's intolerable scorn
Still falls to every woman born.

" Strong to inspire, strong to please,
My love was unto Pericles;
The Corsican, the demigod
Whose feet upon the nations trod,
Shrunk from my wit as from a rod.
The number and its secret train
Eluded not my restless brain.
Beyond the ken of man I saw,
With Colon's eyes, America.
Into the heart of mystery,
Of light and earth I plunged, to me
The atom bared its perfect plot."

What gifts have we, that she has not?

" Was I not lord of life and death
In Egypt and in Nineveh?
Clothed with Saint Stephen's majesty
My arm dealt justice mightily.
Men that beheld me caught their breath
With awe. I was Elizabeth.
I was the Maid of God. Mine was
The sway of all the Russias.
What was my guerdon, mine to take?
A crown of slander, and the stake! "

How shall we comfort her, how ease
The pang of thousand centuries?

" Back from my aspiration hurled,
I was the harlot of the world.
The levelled walls of Troy confess
My devastating loveliness.
Upon my bosom burns the scar
Eternal as the sexes are.
I was Prince Borgia's concubine,
Phryne I was, and Messaline,
And Circe, who turned men to swine."

But shall they be forgotten, then,
Whom she has turned from swine to men?

" New creeds unto the world I gave,
But my own self I could not save.
For all mankind one Christ has sighed
Upon the Cross, but hourly
Is every woman crucified!
The iron stake of destiny
Is plunged into my living side.
To Him that died upon the Tree
Love held out trembling hands to lend
Its reverential ministry,
And then came Death, the kindest friend—
Shall my long road to Calvary,
And man's injustice, have no end? "

O sons of mothers, shall the pain
Of all child-bearing be in vain?
Shall we drive nails, to wound her thus,
Into the hands that fondled us?

MARGINALIA

MARGINALIA

THE CANDLE AND THE FLAME

THIS poem preludes the present collection, because its panoramic sweep and its progression from the physical to the metaphysical strike the keynotes to which my mind is attuned. To me passion is always terrifying when I remember that the same fire that lights my veins has burned in so many others, and will continue to flare and devour when only ash shall remain of us. Thus I can shudderingly see in the eyes of my paramour the whole amorous pageant of the race, the strange and terrible history of love from the Queen of Sheba to Paolo and Francesca, from Heliogabalus to Ludwig II.

> "The legions marching from the sea
> With Cæsar's cohorts sang of thee,
> How thy fair head was more to him
> Than all the land of Italy."

Cæsar seems to have delighted in the curious pastime of permitting those whose realm he had subjugated to vanquish his heart. Cæsarion bears witness to his liaison with Cleopatra, while a ribald couplet sung by his soldiers perpetuates his infatuation for the ruler of the sun-kissed land which, in after years, was to give birth to Antinous. The episode in which Nikomedes, king of Bithynia, figures

has passed into history from the lips of the legions through the pages of Suetonius.

> "Yea, in the old days thou wast she
> Who lured Mark Antony from home
> To death and Egypt . . ."

Cæsar loved the Egyptian with half a heart, hence he escaped; Antony gave his whole heart, and perished.

"Thou saw'st old Tubal strike the lyre," etc.

Tubal was one of the few Old Testament characters who made life more beautiful. He was the inventor of music. He must also have been the first great lover. Song, among men, as in the animal kingdom, derives its primary impetus from things phallic.

> "Perhaps the passions of mankind
> Are but the torches mystical
> Lit by some spirit-hand to find
> The dwelling of the Master-Mind
> That knows the secret of it all,
> In the great darkness and the wind."

Why should not the gods, if gods there be, experiment with us as we experiment with other creatures? Much to my surprise I found a similar idea in a recent book by an eminent ecclesiastic.

THE PARROT

"EVERY English singer seems to have chosen some bird symbolical of his poetical temperament. Keats the nightingale, Shelley the skylark, Swinburne the sea-swallow, Poe the raven. Mr. Viereck, appropriately

enough, chooses the parrot." Lest some critic say so, I prefer to make this affirmation myself. Parrots are not only gorgeous birds, but very wise and very human. I often think that they know far more than they care to communicate, that behind their uncouth articulations there are wonderful things for which they have not utterance, primeval and forest secrets inherited through a thousand years, which they may not betray.

> "The soul-spark in all sentient things
> Illumes the night of death and brings,
> Remembered, immortality . . ."

Matter is indestructible. In infinity, as Nietzsche saw, the same combinations must inevitably reoccur. If we can only bridge the chasm between two recurrent combinations, we shall have achieved immortality. If we make our lives intense and gorgeously individual, we can more easily draw a bridge across the abyss of years. If another Jesus is born, his mind will automatically revert to the Crucifixion, just as Napoleon's mind returned naturally to his greatest prototypes, Alexander and Cæsar. While I cannot conceive of individual immortality, it is equally impossible for me to conceive of the destruction of individuality. For any being, human or otherwise, possessing a spark of individuality there can be to my mind no total extinction. This view is endorsed by the great religions of the world.

> "Thus deemed the Prophet on whose knee
> The kitten slumbered peacefully,
> And surely good Saint Francis, he
> Who as his sister loved the hind."

Mohammed's regard for animals was proverbial. On one occasion he is said to have severed the sleeve of his garment rather than disturb the slumber of his feline favourite. Saint Francis was wont to preach sermons to the birds of the forest and the beasts of the field. There is a charming reference to Saint Francis in the prayer of the birds in the fourth act of "Chantecler":

"Faites-nous souvenir de Saint François d'Assise,
Et qu'il faut pardonner à l'homme ses reseaux
Parce qu'un homme a dit: 'Mes frères les oiseaux'!"

THE PRISONING OF SONG

MACHINERY has found its singer. Why should the phonograph be without honour, seeing that it gives to "beauty audible" the immortality denied by nature? The world would wear an altered face if the graves of the Pharaohs had voices, and if the accents of Jesus Himself could still be heard among men.

The vocabulary of the poem belongs to the literature of the past, as poetic vocabularies always must; its spirit belongs to the present. Both Kipling and Whitman have given us hints as to the language of the poetry of the future, but even in their best work we find some words that strike us as uncouth and that may not be sanctioned by time.

GERSUIND

IN his old age Charlemagne, according to legend, was enamoured of a girl who had the body of a child and the heart of a harlot. Hauptmann recently put this strange creature into one of his plays, but I have met the

reincarnation of Gersuind. Who she is I may not tell. Where she is I know not. Perhaps she has returned to the baronial mansions of her native land. Perhaps she languishes in some exotic gaol, sunk to degradation beyond speech. Perhaps she has found peace, if peace there be, in the grave.

> " Lo! I have not the strength divine
> Of Him whose bare feet ruled the sea . . ."

This metaphor was suggested by a haunting line in " Santa Teresa " by the late Catulle Mendès.

> " And ere God's hosts are marshalled bright
> And the last dreaded veil withdrawn . . ."

Doomsday has always had for me poetically a curious fascination—perhaps the influence of a Puritanic environment!

NERO IN CAPRI

MY history is as good as Shakespeare's geography. Nero may never have been in Capri, the haunt of Tiberius and his ghastly vices, but he *should* have been there. Nero in Capri is Nero satiated. There is in this poem the despair of physical passion. Voluptuousness pressed to the uttermost limit touches upon the spiritual. We are ready for the cloak of the Stoic or the cross of the Christian when we realize that ultimate satisfaction always betrays and eludes us.

> " The books of Elephantis tell
> Only the fortunes that befell," etc.

The shameful books of Elephantis, as Wilde calls them, favourite literary pabulum of Tiberius, were unfortunately lost in the chaos of the nations that marked the fall of the Roman Empire, but we may imagine that Nero read them and that, like all things, they bored him. . . .

> " Bring me the yearning of the dreams
> Of all the young men amorous! " etc.

The baffled voluptuary seeks appeasement by the multiplication of stimuli. He desires to thrill with the sex vibration of the entire universe. His search for new sensations ends in a form of Pansexualism. Here Nero and Whitman, the Pantheist, meet on common ground. In this poem physical passion reaches its ultimate climax.

A BALLAD OF MONTMARTRE

I ONCE made the reckless remark that the three men I most admired were Christ, Napoleon, and Oscar Wilde, each a martyr to his creed, the ethical, the dynamic, and the æsthetic. After calm reflection I cannot find three men who typify more perfectly the great intellectual and temperamental world-currents. Recently in Paris I visited the graves of Napoleon and Oscar Wilde. As Jerusalem was too far away, I paid my devotions to the founder of Christianity, not at Nôtre Dame, but at the tomb of another intellectual of the race of Christ—Heinrich Heine.

It seemed a pity that Wilde and Heine, his spiritual progenitor, never met in the flesh. For that reason I took the liberty to introduce their ghosts to each other. Wilde, no less than Heine, belonged to a brilliant and down-

trodden race. Both were outcasts from their people, both died in exile in Paris. Both were Pagans, yet both had comprehended the Man of Sorrows. Wilde, by the way, hated the Jews, but when we are food for the worm we may find food for reflection.

> (" I loved them not on earth, but men
> Change somehow, having died,")

as Oscar philosophically acknowledges in the poem.

Oscar Wilde was originally buried in Bagneux Cemetery; subsequently his remains were removed to Père La Chaise. Having been disturbed in his slumber once, we can well imagine Wilde's sleepless spirit wandering in search of congenial companionship to Montmartre, where Heine was laid to rest. My pilgrimage to the grave of Wilde was not without piquancy, for as Elsa Barker, the poet, reminded me as we stood by the little mound, I was the first who told in print the story of Wilde's still being among the living. The *canard,* for such it seems to be, has been revived from time to time in the Sunday magazines of the daily papers. When I first wrote it, wishing it to be true, my article, rejected as " too yellow " by the New York *World* and the New York *Journal,* was printed by Jeannette Gilder in the sedate *Critic.* In my youth I have at times been accused of being a heavy borrower from Wilde. Rendering unto Oscar what is Oscar's, the protest against psychopathic inquiry into his life may repay my debt.

> " Because I drew from Shakespeare's heart
> The secret of his love. . . ."

See Wilde's "Portrait of Mr. W. H."; also "De Profundis." "Those who have the artistic temperament go into exile with Dante and learn how salt is the bread of others, and how steep the stairs; they catch for a moment the serenity and the calm of Goethe. . . . Out of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' they draw, to their own hurt it may be, the secret of his love . . ."

A BALLAD OF KING DAVID

DAVID, Bath-Sheba, and Jonathan make a curious trio. This poem reveals an unsuspected nuance in the interpretation of the emotional triangle.

THE BALLAD OF THE GOLDEN BOY

LE GALLIENNE has celebrated the Golden Girl. Why should not I sing the Golden Boy? The poem was suggested to me by a well-known anecdote of Leonardo da Vinci which I discovered in a book on hygiene. Da Vinci, unacquainted with the action of colour on the skin, stained a lad from head to foot with gold for a Florentine pageant. The poor lad died of suffocation within an hour, but to me his fate seems not unenviable.

> "Upon his lips curled wistfully
> The smile that Mona Lisa had."

It pleases me to imagine that he may have been a brother of that Mona Lisa whose curious smile has come down to us through the ages. Maybe her smile darkened the lips of the lad when he heard his doom . . .

> *"His life was as a splash of gold*
> *Against the plumage of the night."*

Can any life be more wonderful? Let this be my epitaph, if I die before thirty. After thirty nothing matters . . .

THE CYNIC'S CREDO

THIS poem embodies an eternally recurrent human mood,—not a philosophy of life as such, but a philosophy of life as seen from a certain angle. There certainly are times when the gift of self-analysis, the gift of thought, seems a curse. God, we are told, is knowledge. We often are most unhappy when we are most like God! God perhaps is not happy. . . . Hardy, Shaw, Bergson, many modern poets and thinkers, have substituted for an all-perfect, complacently Hebraic deity, a world-spirit, imperfect and struggling. The modern mind, more anthropomorphic than the ancient Hebrews', substitutes for Jehovah a celestial Hamlet.

LIFE

LIFE is death, death is life—the eternal antinomy. Truth can speak only in self-contradiction.

Death must love life, because he destroys it, as the female spider destroys and devours its mate.

IRON PASSION

> "Come unto me with cruel, loveless eyes,
> O iron passion of the lords of song!"

THE wish was fulfilled, for the space of a poem, by the Little Maid of Sappho whose personality, perverse and wistful, furnishes the substance for a poem that appears on another page.

> "Who, hating, loved that Lesbia . . ."

"*Odi et amo*"—the bitter cry of Catullus. The swan must die to sing his song. So the soul maybe must die more deaths than one for the sake of a sonnet . . .

INHIBITION

FREUD, the great Austrian psychologist, has taught us to regard the subconscious mind as the guardian posited between consciousness and the lowest strata of the mind. Horrible passions, racial memories destructive to modern civilization, seethe unknown to us in the mystic abysses of our being. The "guardian of the nether mind" bars their entry into the conscious and transforms and transmutes them before they translate themselves into consciousness. This same inhibitory impulse, however, often comes into play when it is not called for. Something that we can hardly define frequently seals our lips when we would speak of "tender things" and bare our souls to those we love. Afterwards we regret the kind words we left unsaid, silenced by an incomprehensible mental machinery set in motion by levers beyond our reach.

ON BROADWAY

"Luxurious-cushioned wheels a revel-train
Where kings of song with weary feet have trod,
Where Poe, sad priest to Beauty and to Pain,
Bore through the night the Vision and the God."

POE, for want of carfare, more than once walked the long distance from lower Broadway to his home in Fordham on foot.

"And yet, perhaps, in this assemblage vast,
In some poor heart sounds the enraptured chord," etc.

A poet, a human derelict, sometimes calls on me at the office. His breath is drenched with whiskey and his soul with music. He never has any money when he comes to see me, and I never have any when he goes. I take the same supercilious interest in him which Poe's more prosperous contemporaries may have bestowed upon Poe himself when, drunk and bedraggled, the poet invaded their luxurious homes. Yet, who can tell? Perhaps this man's name will ring through the ages on wings of thunder even as Poe's, when we, to whom fortune has been kinder, are as completely immersed in oblivion as those who snubbed America's greatest poet. I am sometimes seized with the fear of Baudelaire—the idol heedlessly dragged to the junk-heap may be the true god after all . . .

THE UNKNOWN GODDESS

"Out of the night, O Goddess, send a sign
And prove to me you are indeed divine!"

DID she answer this prayer—she remains a mystery to me yet—I might perish as did Semele when Jove appeared to her in the guise of that golden rain. At any rate, my unknown goddess, having by this time, possibly, become fat as well as discriminating, may mean to save me the loss of one more illusion.

I have more than one friend in the region topographically made definite in these lines. Each has in her way paved my path to ecstasy, but no thrill seems like that brought me by the enduring mystery of the identity of my Unknown Goddess. To think that this sort of thing is all we poor moderns can hope for as a substitute for that veil of Isis which so inspired the nation on the Nile!

THE VIRGIN SPHINX

THIS was written in answer to a sonnet by Muriel Rice, published originally in *The Forum.*

"Lord of the brimming thoughts and burning brain,
Proud-hearted minstrel of resounding sin,
Can naught allay the ecstasy within?
Thine eager eyes wax lurid as they strain
Hellward, to view the beauty of her pain.
Thine alchemy draws music from her din.
Speak,—for thy demon wills it,—what hath been,
Crime, glory, death; for everything is vain.

Torches that flare like to the bosom-heaves
Of sinful woman waiting to be won;
And hungry men with sateless eyes that stun
Resistance back, till Christ in heaven grieves:—
Yet never once the moon between the leaves
Nor winds that rush to meet the rising sun."

"Thine is her secret whom the Serpent wooed,
And his who kindled passion in a stone."

See "Before the Fall" and "Pygmalion and Galatea," both in Miss Rice's "Poems."

THE NUNS

WITH all its crudity and nudity of technique, the painting by Dorothy Rice which inspired these lines exercises a ghastly and weird fascination. The young artist merely shows four nuns in a darkened chapel staring crazily into space. What they see she has not revealed. This is the picture cast upon the screen of my mind.

"Called in what crevice of thy tortured brain,
Prodigious child, from nothingness to pain?"

One wonders out of what cerebral crevices, where prenatal nightmares linger, the painter, almost a child in years, has tortured such figures into the pain of being . . .

QUEEN LILITH

LILITH (or Lailith), "the first wife of Adam," was the sister of Lucifer. She was a goddess among the Phœnicians. The Bible, however, speaks of her only once as the spirit of the night. In the tangled skein of religions she was lost, until rediscovered by Goethe and the English Pre-Raphaelites. But even unresuscitated by the poets, Lilith would have reasserted her fascination. For Lilith, like Lucifer, is immortal. She lives in the heart of every woman, as Lucifer lives in the heart of every man. The Hebrews speak of Lucifer as "the Other." Lilith is always "the Other Woman." One man's Eve is another man's Lilith . . .

> "Whence springs that hunger beyond the flesh
> That only the flesh can appease in me?"

Lilith, like Lucifer, is a rebel. Not vice attracts her, but indomitable intellectual curiosity. She transcends sex even in her sex aberrations. By this sign Lucifer knows her for his kindred; by this sign she acclaims him brother.

> "I hunted thee where the Ibis nods,
> From the Brocken's crag to the Upas Tree . . ."

We may presume that Lilith took part in strange phallic rites in Egypt; in Germany she was an enchantress paying homage to Lucifer at the Witches' Sabbath; and in

Java, transformed into a tree, she gave monstrous dreams and death to the wayfarer.

> " My lonesomeness was as great as God's,
> When He cast us out from His Holy See."

Lucifer and his sister Lilith alone of all the angels were the peers of God. When He had hurled brother and sister to bottomless perdition, He must have been lonesome indeed, surrounded only by the servile throng of meek submissive angels. Perhaps the reconstructed Roman Catholic heaven, with the addition of the Trinity and Mary, Queen of Angels, was the product of the solitude of the Almighty. Unable to find a companion, He trisected Himself, and, having lost Lilith, borrowed a woman of human birth to reign in His kingdom. This is not theology, but what may be presumed to be Lucifer's interpretation of celestial evolution.

(" How art thou fallen, Gabriel! ")

To Lucifer's mind it is not he that is fallen, but the angels, once his mates, who humbly bow to Jehovah. The idea of the Sons of Heaven telling beads and murmuring earth-made prayers in honour of a lowly Jewish maid must seem the climax of humiliation and abasement to this Uranian rebel.

2. SAMUEL, I. 26.

FRIENDSHIPS, like love, are predetermined. There must be some physiological and spiritual law of affection that can be expressed—and perhaps will be some day —in an algebraic equation.

ENIGMA

ENIGMA never spoke. The curse of Eve, the silence of a thousand years, was upon her. Not every woman is a Sphinx without riddle. The silence of Enigma haunted me. I have always been attracted by the Sphinx. Let me refer to the finale of *Nineveh* for a moment. There I foregathered the Sphinx who cast the spell over Œdipus, the Sphinx who was inscrutable to Ptolemy and the Sphinx who purples Babylon. One poem resulted. The ancients would have made many. But ours is an age of Edisons, not of Platos. The lines I made were to have been my farewell to the theme which, I find now to my cost, follows me like that beggarman who forever above crowds waved his lean arm at Whitman.

A LITTLE MAID OF SAPPHO

THE Little Maid of Sappho lifts her quizzical head first in a chapter entitled "Some Women" in my *Confessions of a Barbarian.* She was a little girl I met in Berlin several years ago. "Your arms," I said of her, "were lilies; you were frail, childlike; but your eyes peered with demoniacal passion into ancient abysses glittering with putrefaction. The thought of you, little girl, fills me with vague unrest. You might have been my fate: you were hardly an episode. Perhaps we shall meet again. But you will then be beyond salvation." We did meet again. She knew my poem by heart, but somehow she had ceased to impress me.

The poem may be divided artistically into four sections. First, there is the appeal to the girl's passion. When this is vain, the poet plays on her vanity. Being loved of

Sappho, she is still unmoved. The poet then exhorts her feminine perversity.

> "Incite my passion, my embraces flee—
> And never, never, never come to me!"

When this avails not, he appeals to the mother in her:

> "I only know I need you more than she . . ."

That may be a psychological blunder. It is the mother who first dies in those who caught "stray breaths of Sapphic song that blew through Mytilene." And yet I wonder if even perverted passion can entirely extirpate the mother-instinct in woman?

CHILDREN OF LILITH

THE division of the world into two sexes, according to modern psychology, is as arbitrary as it is misleading. Male and female elements are curiously mixed in the same individuals. Besides those in whom masculine and feminine characteristics predominate mentally and physically, there are also, to quote the noted neurologist, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld of Berlin, individuals who, spiritually at least, constitute, what may be termed, a "transitional sex." If we re-read history in the light of our new-gained knowledge, we shall make startling discoveries. In "Aiander" and "Aiogyne" (see *Nineveh*) I have depicted the Eternal Man and the Eternal Woman. Here I trace the third, transitional sex, through the alleys of time.

As Villon has sung a ballad of dead ladies, I dedicate to him this ballad of dead lads. Sporus, the mignon of

Nero, was responsible for the burning of Rome; Heliogabalus smothered his guests with roses; and a Gallic poet tells the pitiful story of the boy-emperors of Rome, who, without exception, came to a tragic and untimely end.

"Where is that city by the Nile,
Reared by an emperor's bronze distress?"

Antinoë, reared by Hadrian in commemoration of the young Bithynian, Antinous, still exists, but of its former splendour not a trace remains.

". . . he whom Jesus loved
Was not the rock on which He built."

The Bible distinctly states of John that it was he "whom Jesus loved," yet, with divine wisdom, the Messiah entrusted His keys not to him, but to Peter. For Peter, though thrice a traitor to the Lord, was made of sterner stuff than the younger disciple whose romantic and unstable temperament was not adamantine.

LOVE'S AFTERMATH

"At last I understand
Who with untrembling hand
Destroy a lovely shell,
To save the soul from hell!"

THE reaction of the flesh which has made murderers and saints. . . .

THE SINGING VAMPIRE

THERE is something of the vampire in every woman; there is also something of the vampire in every artist. When both meet in the artist-woman, then, as Shaw enunciates in "Man and Superman," woe to the

male! But when the artist-woman meets the artist-man, catastrophe is inevitable. This poem exemplifies in tragic verse what Shaw tells in comic prose.

"Why slay this stainless Hyacinth?"

This line has been curiously misinterpreted. Hyacinth is, of course, not the character who dramatically upbraids his erstwhile mistress, but a young friend of the speaker. Shakespeare might have addressed these words to the Dark Lady when he beheld his "better angel" in her sinister toils.

THE MASTER KEY

COMPARE Shakespeare's "Sonnets," especially 144 and 29. When, "in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes," Shakespeare "all alone beweeps his outcast state," he is least admirable. A wholesome dash of authentic paganism would have rendered his heart-history less tragic. We must not only return good for evil as Christ taught, but we must turn evil into good, and "from hell's lees still crush the goodly wine."

THE PILGRIM

MAY one not save a soul by subjecting it to the uttermost degradation, by hammering upon the spirit until one strikes fire? If evil is as essential a part of the cosmic scheme as good, may not redemption be wrought through evil? The true Saviour may be Anti-Christ . . .

THE PRINCESS WITH THE GOLDEN VEIL

"THE VAMPIRE," a dramatization of my novel, *The House of the Vampire*, had a "run" in New York, but, as a metropolitan journal remarked, "it wasn't exactly a Marathon." Counting Chicago and Saint Louis, there were in all one hundred performances of the play. My collaborator in the dramatization, Edgar Allan Woolf, introduced a number of distinctly human features not contained in the novel. This little ballad which the hero reads as the curtain falls in the first act is one of my few contributions to the dramatization. My friends insisted that the verses were not without merit. They are reprinted here to refute their assertion. The poem is indebted for whatever charm it may have possessed in the play to the imaginative rendering of John E. Kellerd who impersonated the Vampire.

JOAN'S FAREWELL

FROM my translation of Schiller's "Maid of Orleans," produced June 22d, 1909, at the Harvard Stadium, for the benefit of the Germanic Museum, by Maude Adams. Inasmuch as I was dealing with a classic, I was constrained to preserve fidelity to the text. This is one of the reasons why I have not published my version in book form. The translator must almost invariably be, what the Italians call him, a traitor. One can rarely be true to the original, and at the same time be true to the essence of poetry. I was glad to be able to serve, however humbly, the mission of interpreting the spirit of the land of my birth to the land of my choice and adoption. This

monologue, known to every German school-child throughout the world, is probably the most famous in the entire play.

CHANTECLER'S ODE TO THE SUN

"CHANTECLER," as a German playwright wittily remarked to me, was everywhere a "successful failure." This was due, not to lack of merit in the play, but to the over-inflated expectations of the public through an advertising campaign waged with unequalled audacity for a period of several years. After-years will give to Rostand's play its just recognition. His "Hymn to the Sun," which I have attempted to render freely in English, will be remembered for its curious mixture of optimism and pessimism. The author's philosophy throughout is constructive and cheerful, but the last verse,

> "Save for thy love, O Mother Sun,
> All things would seem but what they are!"

betrays his inherent sadness. He is an optimist without illusions . . .

I have substituted iambic tetrameters for the Alexandrines so dear to Gallic ears, for we cannot employ the characteristic French verse form in English without cramping the meaning and despoiling the music.

THE BREEZE

FROM "The Jesters," a play by Zamaçois, charmingly interpreted both by Sarah Bernhardt and Maude Adams. Here, in contradistinction to my translation of "Joan's Farewell," I have indulged in every imaginable

license. I have attempted to rewrite, not to translate, the French poem.

ATTAR OF SONG

" Death in its shadow, dreams the Upas tree . . ."

TO those who dream under the Upas tree, death comes over night.

". . . with its dew, as sugar sucks the bee,
I have enriched the honeycomb of rhyme."

The evil in art needs no justification beyond this. The bee may gather honey from poison flowers, the poet attar of song from his own sins and loves and the sins and loves of the world. The poet alone may safely dream under the Upas tree . . .

THE BURIED CITY

ARE not all our lives reared on buried cities, sick with the ashes of dead memories, ancestral and individual? Man is never a unit physically and spiritually; we are made up of many layers, often but ill-adjusted in their mutual relations.

" And like the peal of an accursèd bell
Thy voice call ghosts of dead things back from hell . . ."

Even as the peal of a bell rung by the worshippers of Satan, chanting in a deserted chapel the litany of damnation, may reach the fiends of hell, so some trivial sound or the voice of one we love may conjure up unexpectedly from the substrata of consciousness shades of the hell within us . . .

THE IDOL

WE are all idol worshippers in our youth. I, too, have worshipped strange gods in my day. There is a Book of Idols in *Nineveh*. But the Sign of the Beast is always there.

Why is it that the supernatural when it enters our lives always smacks of black magic? Judging by some of his stories in "The Innocence of Father Brown," Gilbert K. Chesterton, who seems to be on more familiar terms with the Almighty than any other living writer, is actually afraid of fairies. . . .

TRIUMPHATRIX, MONADS, FINALE

THE magic of virginity may conquer the memory and the magic of Circe, but doubt is even stronger than love. The soul, as Leibnitz has said, is a "monad," a "house without windows." There can be no perfect understanding between two beings, and happiness comes to us only when we are prepared to accept life's imperfect compromise. Perhaps somewhere in Infinity we may become one and perfect. Love, rather than wisdom, may lead the way, though the finale may be sad disillusion. Love may take wings and lose its way ere the goal be reached. Besides, the goal, too, may be a figment of dreams . . .

A NEW ENGLAND BALLAD

THIS poem embodies a Hellenic conception of Christ. My Christ, like the Aryan Christ of Houston Stewart Chamberlain ("The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century"), is a joyous figure pointing not to death, but to

life. "Many founders of religions," declares Chamberlain, "have imposed penance in respect to food upon themselves and their disciples; not so Christ; He emphasizes particularly that He had not fasted like John, but had so lived that men called Him 'a glutton and a wine-bibber.' . . . What Buddha teaches is, so to speak, a physical process; it is the actual extinction of the physical and intellectual being; whoever wishes to be redeemed must take the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. In the case of Christ we find nothing similar: He attends marriages, He declares wedlock to be a holy ordinance of God, and even the errors of the flesh He judges so leniently that He himself has not a word of condemnation for the adulteress; He indeed speaks of wealth as rendering the 'conversion' of the will more difficult—as, for example, when He says that it is more difficult for a rich man to enter into that kingdom of God which lies within us than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, but He immediately adds—and this is the characteristic and decisive part—'the things which are impossible with men are possible with God.'"

Christ, Chamberlain might have added, suffered woman to anoint His forehead with spikenard, and to dry His weary feet with the caress of her hair. Jesus to me is the beautiful youth who confounded the scribes in the temple, not the sorrowful bearded figure of the last movement. Wilde, too, in "De Profundis," dwells on the Greek aspect of Christ. The synthesis of Greek and Christian always has been to me a subject of fascination. I can trace the growth of the idea in my own work. More than seven years ago, in the final stanza of

" Hadrian " (*Gedichte,* 1904) this conception is clearly foreshadowed.

> " Where unto Beauty sacrifice is given
> There let us kneel to worship and adore,
> Whether its star transcendent rose in heaven
> O'er Grecian hill or Galilean shore."

In " Before the Cross " and " Provocatio ad Mariam " (*Nineveh*) the pendulum swings, and my spirit turns again to Golgotha. " Spring " speaks of a healthy pagan reaction. I am again a denizen of Greece. But, unlike Swinburne's, my paganism never blasphemes. " Prince Jesus, set me free," is my prayer. A drop of blood slowly drips from the wounded head. I am free.

> " O sweet Lord Spring, I am free at last
> To follow wherever thy feet have passed,
> Over the dales and over the rills,
> To the gladsome Grecian hills."

The pagan note pervades the last chord of *Nineveh.* But no philosophy can emancipate us from the Nazarene. " We are not," as Chamberlain remarks, " Christians because we were brought up in this or that church, because we want to be Christians; if we are Christians, it is because we cannot help it, because neither the chaotic bustle of life, nor the delirium of selfishness nor artificial training of thought can dispel the Vision of the Man of Sorrow when once it has been seen." In " A New England Ballad " I attempt to reconcile what is Greek and what is Christian in me. I was delighted when, years after, I found in Chamberlain my philosophic justification.

"A New England Ballad" is my answer to Puritanism. Puritanism may have exhausted its force externally, but the virus of intolerance still corrodes our minds. Puritanism crucified Whitman and slandered Poe; its breath is deadly to art. I love Merry Old England, but for New England, at least in this aspect, I have no affection. I regard it as a duty to my Germanic ancestors to supply an antidote to the poison bequeathed to us by the Pilgrim Fathers.

> "Barred in His name the magic bower
> Of mimic kings and queens that seem," etc.

Not only in New England, but in New York, theatrical presentations on the Sabbath are, at this writing, illegal.

> ". . . through a gate obscure and small
> He watched a pale-faced stripling crawl
> Into a closely-shuttered place . . ."

Though Shakespeare be barred on Sunday, the peripatetic Venus and traffickers in vice ply their trade every day in the week.

> "Wearing the hunted look, uncanny,
> Of them that love not much, but many."

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Saint Luke vi: 47). "*Quia multum amavit*"—there is nothing more beautiful in the world, except one sentence in "De Profundis": "Where there is sorrow, there is holy ground" . . .

" The sleek, the oily Pharisees
With the complacent smile of yore—
Dear God, how He remembered these! "

Garments are subject to fashion, but the Pharisee of to-day is brother under his skin to the Pharisee of Jerusalem.

". . . He
I am who at His mother's sign,
And for her glory, turned the water
In the six water-pots to wine!"

In view of the campaign waged by intolerant females, in favour of Prohibition, the fact that Jesus performed His first miracle, the turning of water into wine, at the request of His mother (Saint John ii: 1-11), assumes additional pregnance. Christ's opinion of wine was evidently as pronounced as His opinion of the Sabbath. " The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

" Columbus has not crossed the main
To open up new worlds to pain."

Small as may be the baggage of our immigrants, they bring with them too often the intolerance and the prejudices of the Old World. Here, as Professor Sumner remarks, America has missed her great opportunity, the opportunity of creating a continent entirely free from prejudice and convention.

" The awful beauty of Apollo,
The loving kindness which is Christ."

Since Nietzsche, every thinker has formulated his conception of the Overman. My Overman is both Christian

and pagan. He transcends man, but is still human. He is Christ-Apollo.

THE PLAINT OF EVE

IF the preceding poem limns the Superman as I see him, this poem is my tribute to the Superwoman. "The Plaint of Eve" crystallizes poetically the culture-history of woman from Eve to Madame Curie, from Semiramis to Sarah Bernhardt. In "Aiogyne" (see *Nineveh*) I have chronicled merely the legend of woman's passion. Woman to me was primarily a creature of sex. "Aiogyne" is Old Testament. "The Plaint of Eve" is of the twentieth century. This is the New Sanction.

"Man's mate was I in Paradise . . ."

Woman speaks; after each stanza, like a Greek Chorus, man answers.

"The Son of Man was Mary's Son . . ."

Jesus was not the Son of Man, in that He had no human father, but He surely was the Son of Woman. This, it seems to me, is an interesting point which has never been interpreted, presumably because the fathers of the Church and the theologians were men.

"From the grey dawn when time began
To the Crimean battle-field," etc.

There were Florence Nightingales before Florence Nightingale.

"The shadow queens of Maeterlinck,
Clothed with my soft flesh, cross the brink
Of utter unreality."

Who shall ever tell how much the Belgian Shakespeare is indebted to his wife, the histrionic interpreter of his genius? Madame Maeterlinck is to him what the mysterious Mr. W. H. was to Shakespeare.

"Rautendelein and Juliet,
Who shall my wistful smile forget?"

Fräulein Eysolt—the Eysolt, as she is called for short—meeting the spirit of Hauptmann in the mystical marriage of art, endowed Rautendelein, that strange woodland sprite, sister to Peter Pan, with unforgettable glamour. The vitality of a great actor entering into a dramatic figure may give to the creation of a poet's brain something that was not there before, an indefinable charm that endures when the lips of the actor himself are food for the rose and the worm.

The Juliet to whom I refer is not Mr. W. H., but Julia Marlowe.

"The leader of my boyish band
I rule in Neverneverland."

Peter Pan owes more to Maude Adams than to Barrie himself.

"Hers is the sweetest voice of France,
And hers the sob that like a lance
Has pierced the heart of Italy."

Woman is preëminent in the histrionic profession, which, as Sarah Bernhardt remarks in her "Memoirs," is distinctly

a feminine vocation. The golden voice of Sarah and the sob of Duse have no masculine parallel.

> "With stylus, brush and angelot,
> I seize life's pulses, fierce and hot."

In sculpture, in painting, and in music woman's contribution, if small in volume, is distinctive in quality.

> "In Greece, a suzerain of song . . ."

The voice of Catullus himself was not sweeter than Sappho's. Swinburne, by no means a feminist, reverently acclaims the Lesbian the "supreme head of song." From Sappho to Mrs. Browning there is a long step, yet who can doubt that Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese" compare in quality with Shakespeare's "'sugared' Sonnets"?

> "Strong to inspire, strong to please
> My love was unto Pericles;
> The Corsican," etc.

Pericles without Aspasia is unthinkable. Napoleon feared Madame de Staël more than the Holy Alliance. His letter and instructions with regard to this curious woman point to a personal animosity which he could hardly have felt for an intellectual inferior. As late as October 21, 1816, in Saint Helena, Napoleon paid this grudging tribute to his staunchest feminine adversary: "After all is said and done, Madame de Staël is a woman of great talent; very distinguished, of very keen intelligence; she has won her place. It might be said if, instead of carping at me, she had taken my side, it would have been useful to me."

"The number and its secret train
Eluded not my restless brain.
Beyond the ken of man I saw,
With Colon's eyes, America."

Isabella, almost alone among her contemporaries, male and female, was endowed with sufficient insight and sympathy to grasp the immensity of Columbus and of his vision. The science of abstract numbers is indebted to Sonya Kovalevsky, who held the chair of mathematics at Upsala.

". . . to me
The atom bared its perfect plot."

The most monumental discovery of modern times, which has revolutionized our conception of the structure of matter, was, at least, shared by a woman. The French Academy may withhold its laurels from Madame Curie;—can we?

"What was my guerdon, mine to take?
A crown of slander, and the stake!"

From Cleopatra to Maria Theresa, from Catherine the Great to Elizabeth, slander was woman's chiefest reward for her stewardship of nations, while both slander and the stake were the guerdon of Joan of Arc.

"Back from my aspiration hurled,
I was the harlot of the world," etc.

One stanza here exhausts what takes up my entire attention in my earlier portrait of the Eternal Woman as she

stalks through time. The point of view is completely reversed. I have discovered my Social Conscience . . .

> " New creeds unto the world I gave,
> But my own self I could not save."

This seems to be the common characteristic of all Messiahs, male and female, from Jesus to Mrs. Eddy.

> " Shall my long road to Calvary,
> And man's injustice, have no end? "

The Son of Mary died for all Mankind, not for mankind alone. Must we wait for a female Christ to be nailed to the Cross for the delivery of Woman?

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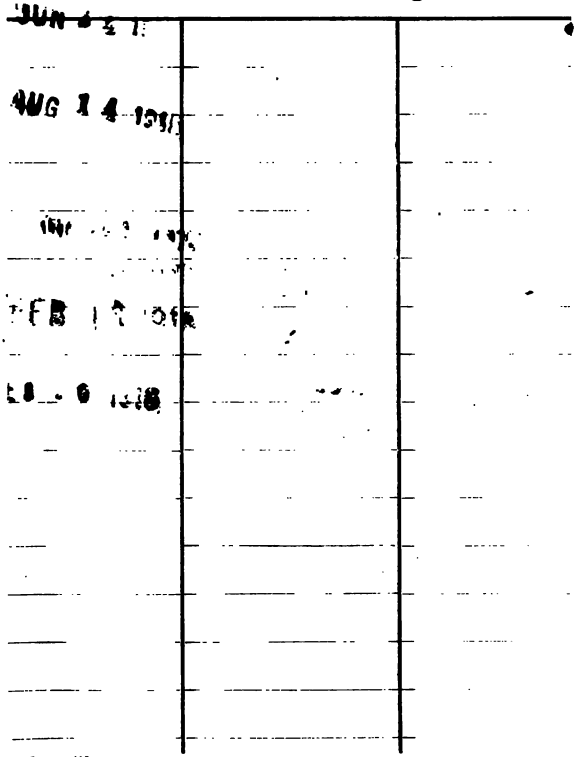

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